


# SKRATCH

issue #92

oct 2003



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narcoleptic youth  
the bled  
death cab for cutie  
motion city soundtrack  
madvillainz  
the aquabats  
strike anywhere  
teen idols  
the skulls  
beloved (US)  
fairweather  
saosin  
the havoc  
joseph hill  
eastern youth  
street dogs  
the great redneck hope  
streetlight manifesto  
vancey



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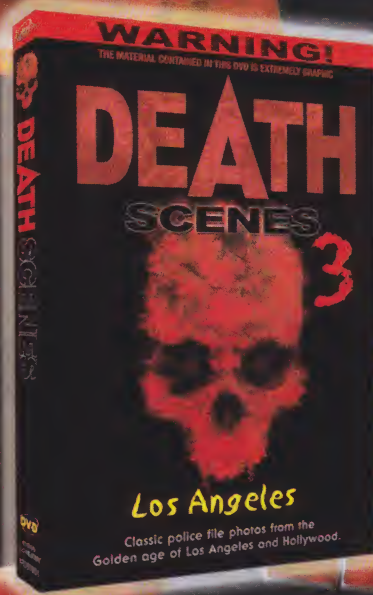
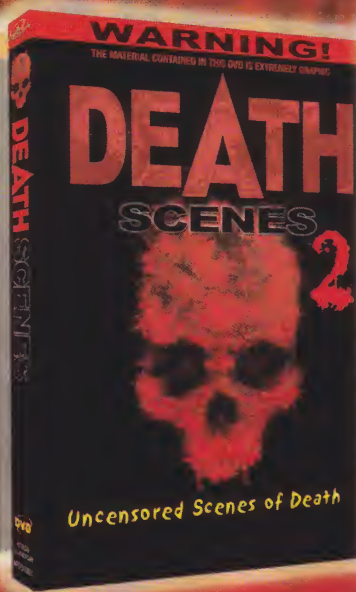
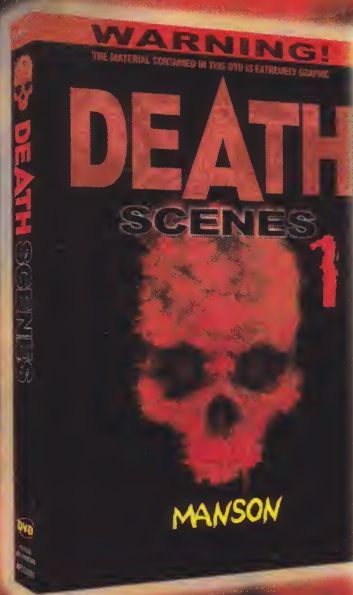


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FRI OCT 17



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TIME IN MALTA  
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HOTWIRE FATE 13

SAT OCT 18

the  
**Vibrators**  
**SWINDLE**  
**ONE 21**  
TV SMITH (OF THE ADVERTS)  
Cell Block 5  
The Loads



SUN OCT 19

Who Killed Bambi  
Hypocrites  
Distance From A Far  
Billy Brian and the Andrews  
suicide Squad  
1929  
The Great Awakening  
Whut to Do  
Devil Lived  
Table 4 Two

THURS OCT 23

Librium  
Unfinished Business  
Second Chance  
Doner  
Split Decision

FRI OCT 24

**THE METEORS** *The Slammer*  
**JAMES DEMONS**  
plus special guests

FRI OCT 31

**HARDCORE HALLOWEEN 2003**  
**THROWDOWN**  
*Bleeding Through*  
Donnybrook \* Cold War

SAT OCT 25

Downside Up  
Seraphym  
Last Blue Film  
Raubolt  
Fate of the Fallen  
Autopilot Planes Dont Crash  
Adam in Evil  
State of Insomnia  
Black Tie Suicides  
Mudskipper

SAT NOV 1

**MENACE**  
**MAD PARADE**  
Hollytree  
Infected \* The Scarred

SUN NOV 2



*Between The Buried and Me*

A LIFE ONCE LOST  
THE END  
FINAL BURDEN  
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

WED NOV 5

**SKINLAB**  
Hostility \* Curbcheck  
Bleed the Sky \* Anew



FRI NOV 7

Finding Time  
2 Way Solitaire  
Defy and Deny  
3 Minute Miracle  
One Star Away  
The Antagonists  
The Thieves  
40 oz Beverage  
Tomorrow's Present  
O-Ball  
Radio Silence

SAT NOV 8

Bloodletting In North America  
**FORGE**  
**SPAWN**  
Spawn of Possession  
Severed Savior

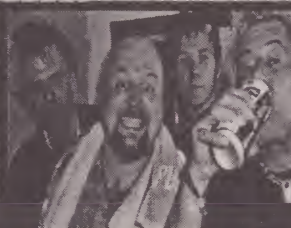
TUES NOV 11

**SLAVES**  
**ON DOPE**  
Soul Inside  
Stoic

FRI NOV 14

**LOVE**  
Blood Stands Still  
Skare Tactic  
Strain Theory

SAT NOV 15



**U.K. SUBS**  
*Toxic Narcotic*  
FINAL CONFLICT  
MIDNIGHT CREEPS  
ALL OR NOTHING HC

SUN NOV 16

**SILVERSTEIN**  
**BAYSIDE**  
eleventeen  
plus guests

SAT NOV 22

**SINABEACH**  
*Symphony in Peril*  
Final Burden \* Oblige

FRI NOV 28

**EVERGREEN TERRACE**  
**GLASSEATER**  
**CALICOSYSTEM**  
gone without trace  
beauty to ashes

SAT DEC 6

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 Digital Unicorn  
 Plus Special Guest

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**The Beautiful Mistake**  
 The Chemistry • Death Campaign  
 Wester • One More Weekend

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 Next In Line • Forgotten Arrival

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**Give Up The Ghost**  
**Fairweather**  
**The Bled**  
**Daughters**

**SUN-OCT 26** **SKA SKA SKA \$12**  
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 The Independents • La Banda Skalavera

**THU-OCT 30** **POP PUNK \$8**  
**Dynamite Boy**  
 Near Miss  
**Staring Back**  
 Hollywood Endings

**10/31 & 11/1** **INDIE ROCK \$12**  
**Further Seems Forever**  
 Armour For Sleep • Beloved

**SUN-NOV 2** **INDIE ROCK \$8**  
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 Ettison Clio  
 Wilhelm Scream  
 Plus Special Guest

**TUE-NOV 4** **POP PUNK \$10**  
**Slick Shoes**  
**Catch 22**  
 Boys Night Out  
 Worthless United

**WED-NOV 5** **POP PUNK \$10**  
**Catch 22**  
**Slick Shoes**  
 Boys Night Out  
 Worthless United

**THU-NOV 6** **INDIE ROCK \$12**  
**Straylight Run**  
 The New Amsterdams  
**Murder By Death**  
**Jamison Parker**

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**The Queers**  
 Other Bands  
 \*\*\* TBA \*\*\*

**SAT-NOV 8** **PUNK \$8**  
**Panthers**  
**JR Ewing**  
 The Orphans  
 Street Trash

**SUN-NOV 9** **INDIE ROCK \$10**  
**Senses Fail**  
 Everytime I Die  
**Early Times**

**TUE-NOV 11** **INDIE PUNK \$8**  
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 Dance Disaster Movement  
 The Distraction  
 The Willowz  
 The Hollywood Ten

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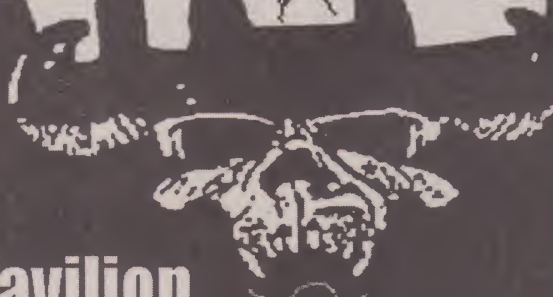
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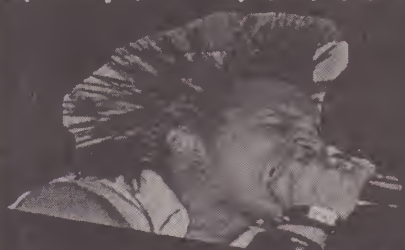
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Releases their Debut Album,  
*Sovereign Mind...***



# MORE PLOPS IN OUR MAILBOX



From: Steven  
To: scott@skratchmagazine.com

dude, what the fuck is up with all these things I have been hearing about bands that suck ANYWAYS having other people writing their albums? The top 3 suspects: The Used, Simple Plan, and Good Charlotte. FUCK THEM. Top 40 comes with a price I guess, huh? Also, what do you think of NOFX releasing "Franco Un-American" to KROQ radio in Los Angeles? Do you think it is good for them to get that exposure, or is it the first step in ruining NOFX shows with the GC/Simple Plan fans?

Steven,

You're a kid and I say that because you throw "fuck" right in the first sentence. It's classy. I can't recall the last time I added such sentiments in a letter as a topic sentence...such as Hi Grandma, It's me your fucking grandson...Yep, it's got a nice ring doesn't it there?

Okay, since this is a letters page, I must tend to your

From: RAZ  
To: <scott@skratchmagazine.com>

A good show is a good show... but with out the pit, that's all it is. What I mean to say is that half of the show is about being there - getting shoved and pounded by sweaty drunken punkers and holding your own. I was never afraid of falling or getting tripped, knowing everytime those same strangers are helping me back up to my feet, even pulling me aside when I get hurt. We watch out for each other and that's what makes it cool. Sure, you get jock-nazis that stand on the outside of the pit throwing sucker punches for kicks, but they are easily dealt with one way or another. Like I said, pits are what make shows great, but there are dick heads out there that make them not so great. Watch out for each other.

From: brittany K  
Subject: my band

hey!im brittany,lead vocalest of an all girl band.we are just starting out with this and we are struggleing big-

Christine,

Who the hell is Tyson? Are you attempting to write a L-e-t-t-e-r? We, Skratch are an inspiration? That's good, I guess? Should I change my name to Tyson?

Some cool band names you say? Well now you're talking. I am a fine-tuned band-naming machine.Let me just oil 'er up...okay (sfx: chugga, chugga)..And here they come...

1. Bitches, man
2. Stop, Drop, and Roll
3. Who's playing?
4. i heard a song on the radio
5. jubba jawawhuh
6. Carnivore:Herbivore
7. Monkeys go Poop
8. Gluestick Mafia
9. Done Driving Chevy's
10. Cocoa-Butter Quarterstick
11. Something's Making Ashes
12. Summer, Spring, Autumn
13. Falling on Ashes
14. Ashes on Asses
15. Fire, then Ashes
16. The Slums
17. You Play Our Fricken Instruments
18. Just FTP it
19. I met you at friendster
20. We Need To Get Noticed

Bye-Bye,  
Scott, Skratch

## favorite quote from our crapbox:

"let's see...your mag. is ok and all, but all I see is all that emo, sit in my room and cry shit bands."

questions even if they are dull. You know I have better things to do like playing "who's the lucky font" or "how many times can I hit delete with my pinky in 30 seconds." Now, that's a good one (oh-ho-ho-ho)..the good old delete-o-game-o. Uh huh. After all, answering questions can be boring. Sometimes, we need to answer are own. I answer my phone, do you? whoaaa..step on back Buck-o.

Enough rambling.

Bands that can't write their own songs are called entertainers. In their hearts, they likely feel empty and unworthy. That's what I think. Of course, it depends on what elements of being in a band you wish to fulfill. However, you and I are not in a band. If I was in a band, I'd love to partake in all songwriting aspects and I'd sing and scream with more sincere, peanut-buttery passion than the next artificially flavored bandwich.

Now, regarding (gosh, i'm a chatty FUCKER tonight) the radio means sellout theory: it's a tough one. Only the band and record label are responsible to make such decisions when presently available. NOFX have been on the Kroq airwaves a couple times before the "Franco Unamerican" song (which I personally find catchy and clever) aired recently. They may be attempting to take their new, found political views and stampede them into mainstream society. I still like them and I think you do too. You're just afraid of what your friends may say. And if so--maybe your friends have more important things to worry about.

By the way, you can turn on or turn off the radio. You have the power!

Cheers,  
Scott, Skratch

time!we have no support and all we have done so far is 3 notebooks of songs.we need to get notaced!help!!!!

Brittany,

You just started this band and you already want to get noticed? This may be the wrong approach! Every band needs to pay its dues. Does your 3 notebooks contain any good lyrics? They don't read, "Fly me to the moon, sweetie" or "I'll knock down trees for you Johnny" or "your green eyes make me greener."? If so, turn your notebooks into forest fires and look me in the eyes and say, "WE SUCK, I should be a cheerleader instead".

Too many bands spend time trying to gain stardom and get big fast. Slow down, learn how to play, get it together, and grow accordingly and naturally (like puberty).

Got it? Good.

From: Christine  
To: scott@skratchmagazine.com

Hey you guys,  
I just have to say...you rock my world. And if I had a pastry cart Tyson you would be the stud muffin!!!! lol how embarassing. Well me and my friends just started a band and u guys are like are inspiration. Theres 4 of us and I'm the lead singer. So that is pretty cool. I just wanted to ask you if u guys had any cool names for our band. Lol were just curious and we hope u can write back to us..maybe,PLEASE!!! Thanx, Peace out, rock on, and all that good stuff!! LOVE YA TYSON lol

With Love,  
Scott, Skratch

From: mikey bastard  
To: scott@skratchmagazine.com

hey...um...well...let's see...your mag. is ok and all, but all I see is all that emo, sit in my room and cry shit bands. Maybe u guy's could do something more on the local punk scene (and no punk is not the pussy pop shit u guys put in there also). Soooo please make some of us happy and maybe put some bands with hard hitting fast as fuck piss on your guts punk bands...thank you...a response will be well appreciated..

Sincerely...Mikey

Mickey,

What magazine are you reading? We offer much more variety exposing many different genres of music (punk, hardcore, indie rock, and so on and so forth). You are a bastard! Read the Narcoleptic Youth or The Skulls interview and quit crying.

Our next issue may contain one big pacifier for you. Keep reading!

Sincerely,  
Scott, Skratch

From: Mike Raya  
To: <scott@skratchmagazine.com>

Thanks so much for the CD Reviews section. It is a great help to finding the good music out there. Please keep it up. You are doing a great job!

Rusty(Christine)



# JUST SAY JULIE



## VAMPIRE CHICK AU GO-GO

by Julie Frederickson

"Halloween is all about fun and this year will bring back some classics like the Comical Chicken and Tacky Tourists; and some new ones like the Milk Carton, Beer Bottle and Plug & Socket couples costume!" Hmm. I just read that on a very earnest Halloween website. Plug and Socket...I

am picturing some well-meaning couple wearing that to their church "harvest" festival and having to explain what they are ("See, I plug into Margie here and..."). I wanted to find out what the most popular Halloween costumes are this year, so I looked on the Internet and called some costume rental

shops. Johnny Depp pirates, hands-down, is the most popular costume for guys. This amuses me, picturing some jock trying to apply eyeliner and tying on a head scarf. I hope these guys adopt Johnny's sashaying walk and the Keith Richards' slurred vocal pattern. Or else it's just a pirate, and we might as well be in third grade. Renaissance costumes are in second place, with a sort of LORDS OF THE RING bent to them. (I'd love to dress as a Ring Wraith, wearing black tattered robes, shrieking, hissing, and riding a nastay, evil black horse). They said there's also a resurgence of Jack Skellington (NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS) costumes, which I applaud. I asked if females are still going for the slutty outfits, French maids, hookers, and yes, those are still in force. The woman may be a boring office assistant the other 364 days but on Halloween she'll stuff herself into fishnet stockings and wear a push-up bra, work her inner bad girl and even order a Red Bull and vodka. Because it seems to me that Halloween went from being a kid thing to a grown-up thing.

I don't remember when this shift occurred, but it seemed that during my childhood Halloween was all about me. My

costume, my trick or treating, my candy. It wasn't for grown-ups. My parents weren't scampering around dressing up for a Pimp n' Ho party. I shared the holiday with Charlie Brown ("I got a rock") and obsessed over my loot for days afterward, sorting it all into piles. Chocolate bars being the most sought after, Reese's Peanut Butter cups being the absolutely most sought after, followed by Tootsie Pops. Dum Dums were acceptable. Now or Later's weren't. Bit o'Honey was not. Pixie Stix were. Hard candy was an insult. Candy Corn in a little paper bag was like being butt-raped. One year some people gave out toothbrushes, and I hope they are all dead now. Halloween, during childhood, was a happy blur of carved pumpkins, sound effects records shrieking and moaning, "Monster Mash" playing, doorbells ringing, Treak or Treat! being called out, groups of kids trudging along the sidewalk in the dark, and overly sugared up kids at school the next day. Sometime during the teenage years and the early twenties Halloween turned into drinking parties, bunny ears, obscuring face masks, sweaty groping, hoping to hear Bauhaus' "Bela Lugosi's Dead," fangs, white face makeup, puking. That was all fine. Now, as a full-fledged adult, I can't figure out how to celebrate this holiday. It's not a holiday, it's a state of mind, a bastardized ancient religious observance. I've tried watching the ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW and giving out candy while wearing some sort of costume. But the doorbell ringers are wearing half-assed costumes, (Spiderman pajamas), no one remembers to say Trick or Treat!, they just sort of grunt and stick out their pillow case, there's a suspicious amount of five o'clock shadow on some of the kids' faces, and the whole Peanuts Gang feeling is just gone. So my husband and I have started to flee. We turn off our lights, hop in the car, dodge the families waddling across our driveway and head for an establishment. If we're lucky there's a drink special called the Nutty Vampire or something that feels festive. No one we know throws lavish Halloween parties, with dry ice, sound effects, punch bowls with eyeballs in them, black-lights, blasting music and vampire chicks go-go dancing from suspended cages.

N o b o d y  
throws



“ Hard candy was an insult. Candy Corn in a little paper bag was like being butt-raped. One year some people gave out toothbrushes, and I hope they are all dead now. ”

these.

Last year I watched Christina Aguilera's DIARY on MTV. Her little brother wanted a Halloween party. Christina intoned into the camera, in her weird Eminem-speak, "Oh we KNOW how to throw down a Halloween pah-ty ah yee." Then she and her white-trash mom spent, honestly, more than a thousand dollars at a party supply store, just for this thing. They stapled mummy cut-outs to the doors, they swagged the place with cob-webs, they wired up a sound effects machine and a strobe light, they rigged up a coffin, it was like they were on speed, both of them. The kid had to wait forever for this to all be completed, so they kept him up until nearly midnight and he was whiny and exhausted and didn't care anymore. I watched it all fascinated, and sort of jealous, at the effort that went into it, the desire to keep the Halloween flame alive. So this year, I'm gonna represent. Fangs, sound effects, carved pumpkin, candy. Maybe I'll dress up like a Milk Carton.

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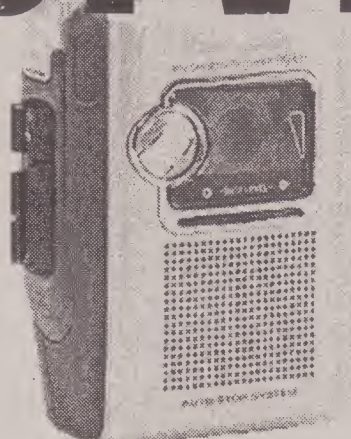
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# {Interviews

# Interviews}



## *in order of appearance:*

saves the day  
narcoleptic youth  
the bled  
death cab for cutie  
motion city soundtrack  
madball  
the aquabats  
strike anywhere  
teen idols  
the skulls  
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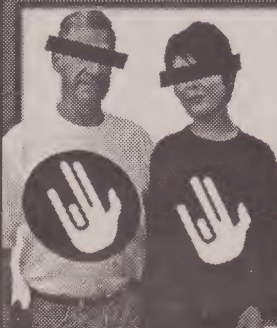
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# saves



**SAVES THE DAY**  
By Tiffany Chow

Saves the Day has done it again. With their new album *IN REVERIE* being released by major label Dreamworks, they have secured for themselves even more solidly the title of a household indie name. They have come a long way from being a small Jersey band with small dreams and big potential. Even though Chris claims he had never anticipated success of this magnitude, there is no way Saves the Day could have avoided it. They were made for success, and it is well-deserved.

**SKRATCH:** Okay, let's get the inevitable out of the way. State your name, your age, what you do in Saves the Day, and your favorite color.

**CHRIS:** My name is Christopher Conley, I am 23 years old. I sing and play guitar in Saves the Day. And my favorite color is purple!

**SKRATCH:** Saves the Day has been around since 1997. In the six years since then, has there ever been any serious doubt in your mind that this is where you want to be and what you want to be doing?

**CHRIS:** Not for a single moment have I doubted it.

**SKRATCH:** Regardless of any doubts or uncertainties, it is clear that the band has enjoyed a huge amount of success, especially with the release of your last album, *STAY WHAT YOU ARE*, which received much praise. Saves the Day has now gained status of a household indie name. How does it feel?



**CHRIS:** Well, it's funny: we don't really have any way to gauge our success. We're usually inside a tour bus or inside our homes. It's not like we're at the high schools where everyone is talking about their favorite band, so we never really know how we're doing until we go on tour—you know, when we play the shows and you can see the reactions of the kids. You see how excited they are to be at our shows. That's when we can tell that people actually do appreciate us. It's remarkable. I feel very lucky to be in this situation; I feel blessed. I can't believe it's happened.

**SKRATCH:** What was it like when the band was first starting out? Did you ever anticipate that amount of success? Were you hoping for it? or did you think it was just going to be you doing what you love?

**CHRIS:** You know, it's funny: I never once thought about it. When we started playing music...well, when I started playing music, I was about 13 or 14 years old, just playing with my friends. That turned into Saves the Day many years later. At the beginning, it never once crossed my mind. "Well, where's this going to take me? I hope we get popular." I just wanted to play music with my friends, and things just kind of snowballed from there. It was never intentional; it all just happened by accident.

**SKRATCH:** That's a pretty cool accident. Your new album *IN REVERIE* will be released on Dreamworks on September 16 instead of on Vagrant. You deserve huge congratulations! How did this label change come about?



**CHRIS:** Well, we went in to record *IN REVERIE* in Los Angeles, and we were under the impression that this would be our final album with Vagrant Records. We had a two-album deal with them, and we gave them *STAY WHAT YOU ARE* in 2001, and then we went to Los Angeles to record our final album with Vagrant. We were just going about our business, recording the album. When we were getting to the end, we really liked what we were hearing, and we thought we'd never been in such a good position in our career. We felt really comfortable playing with each other. We felt it was the right time to move on, but we figured since this is our last album with Vagrant, we wanted to sign with a bigger label for the next album. What happened is that when we finished the album, we had a bunch of labels come into the studio and listen to what we'd done. We were under the impression that if, you know, if they liked what they were hearing, they'd sign us to work with us in the future. But what happened is that the labels heard the music and liked it so much that they wanted to put the music out that they were hearing—that album that we made for Vagrant. We fell in love with the people at Dreamworks, and fortunately they were nice enough to actually want to work with us. So they decided to purchase the album from Vagrant so that they could put it out as a Dreamworks release.

**SKRATCH:** Pretty good deal. What are some specific things you can see the label change doing to benefit Saves the Day?

**CHRIS:** Well, I think any major label has a bit more sway in the world of contemporary music than any independent label has. I think Dreamworks probably has a better radio department and more



# the day

resources to promote our band. I'm sure we'll be written up in a few more magazines and that our video will be played on MTV. And then other than that, they help us out touring, and they're just very supportive. We're really lucky to work with them.

**SKRATCH:** What kind of effect do you think it will have/has had on the band? Do you think it will change the music at all or the group dynamic or the kind of shows you will play?

**CHRIS:** So far, we're waiting to see what the influence of Dreamworks will be like on our band because the album isn't out. (We just now are getting started promoting it.) The first tour we're doing isn't until September 12, so we really have to wait to see what kind of changes happen. But as of now we're still the same guys. I'm assuming we'll always be the same guys. I'm hoping none of us will have an ego swing.

**SKRATCH:** From listening to *IN REVERIE* and seeing the label change, it really appears as if the band has undergone/is

undergoing a lot of serious growth. Do you feel as if your songwriting has matured a lot?

**CHRIS:** I feel like with every record I improve a bit. I wouldn't say the songs are perfect—because if we hope to achieve perfection, we could probably give up now. I think we've gotten a lot better. I think the songs have become a little bit more concise, and we're able to express our ideas a lot more easily now.

**SKRATCH:** Where do you see yourself and *Saves the Day* in five years?

**CHRIS:** Well, it's hard to say. Anything can happen in five years. We could be unemployed and harvesting beer-bellies. Hopefully, we'll continue to be touring and continue making records, and hopefully we'll continue to grow our fan base at a gradual pace.

**SKRATCH:** You guys are gearing up for a major tour with *Taking Back Sunday* and *Moneen*. When it comes to recording and touring? Which do you prefer, and why?

**CHRIS:** I really love both touring and recording because they allow us to explore different avenues of our creativity. When we're in the recording studio making the record, it's very liberating, because you can sit down and play everything 14 times until you get the right take. But when you're playing live, you have to get it all right the first time; you can't redo the song. I get off on both of them.

**SKRATCH:** To tie things up, tell me what album is your favorite as of late.

**CHRIS:** I love *IN REVERIE*.

**SKRATCH:** So you listen to your own CDs?

**CHRIS:** Oh! You mean somebody else. I thought you meant which one of our albums do I like the best. [Laughing] Okay, strike that last comment. My favorite album right now would have to be *THE BEST OF JIMMY REED*. He's an old rock 'n' roll guy. I just listen to it over and over again. I really like *Howling Wolf's* album *MOANING IN*

**"It's not like we're at the high schools where everyone is talking about their favorite band, so we never really know how we're doing until we go on tour..."**



*THE MOONLIGHT*; that's a great album. Actually, I kind of ripped off his title. One of our songs is called "Morning in the Moonlight", and his album is called *MOANING IN THE MOONLIGHT*—you know, M-O-A-N-I-N-G.

**SKRATCH:** Thank you so much for your time. You have fun doing whatever your doing today.

**CHRIS:** Well, Tiffany, have a good night. Bye.

Despite the success *Saves the Day* has achieved and the acclaim Chris Conley's songwriting receives, he has been able to maintain a boy-next-door quality. With this almost-nerdy character, the band maintains a warm place in our hearts as they continue to gain more fans and more attention.





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# NARCOLEPTIC YOUTH

NARCOLEPTIC YOUTH  
Interview by Marcia Taylor

Narcoleptic Youth is one of the best-known punk bands from Southern California's Inland Empire (a.k.a. "the 909"). Formed in 1992 in Corona, the band recorded its first album in 1996. Around the same time, NY won a battle of the bands at Corona's Showcase Theatre and subsequently had a chance to open for D.I. there, which opened the door for them to many other shows with old-school punk bands, such as T.S.O.L., The Adolescents, The Adicts, and U.K. Subs. In addition to several 7"s, the band released a live video in the years between 1996 and 2002. This past year, NY recorded its first full-length and printed 300 copies, 200 of which sold out at the CD-release party. The band is currently waiting for the full run to come off the press.

NY is Joey Bondage on vocals, Binky the Elf on guitar, Jay Sin on guitar, Nick Nautious on bass, and Johnny Cat Litter on drums. I had a chance to meet with them to catch up on the latest with the band.

SKRATCH: What's new with Narcoleptic Youth since we last talked?

JOEY: We got to tour with The Adicts and go into the studio with them. I actually became friends with them. It was really neat. They're really nice guys and know we're big fans. And they treat their fans really well. They like to make their dreams come true.

JAY SIN: Yeah, it was like a day from the Make-a-Wish Foundation for Joey when we got to hang out with them.

SKRATCH: When did you start working on the new record?

JOEY: We started five years ago.

JOHNNY CAT: Yeah, "Vicious Creatures" was on our DISORDER LIVE video that we did in 2000.

SKRATCH: How did you go about recording the songs for the album?

JOEY: First we write the songs. Then we have to learn to play them. We can't afford to go into the studio and stay there while we learn them. We recorded the first half on the first day, the second half on the second day. We mastered on the third day, and on the fourth day we mixed.

SKRATCH: How do

you guys feel about the new record?

BINKY: All the songs blend together really well. It's a concept album, so it really flows.

JOEY: It didn't start out as a concept, but when Binky and I were writing the songs, we were pretty depressed. But it IS tongue in cheek; there's not a suicidal message. And when you see the new album cover, it has a double entendre; it's not serious.

BINKY: Tell her about the chick on the cover.

JOEY: That's a crazy story! The girl on the current cover is named Michelle. The band held a contest where we asked the fans to send in a picture of a girl's image that was really eye-catching. We got a lot of girls with Mohicans. We even had a guy send in a picture of himself dressed like Snow White. Anyway, we picked the picture of Michelle that is on the limited-edition cover. And there she is, lying on the sidewalk with her brains spattered around her. Well, two weeks after she posed for that photo, she was hit by a car while she was walking in a crosswalk on her way to work. She got hurt really badly. Her family said when they came to pick her up, she was lying in the exact same position as in the picture on the album cover. She's a really tough girl. When I visited her in the hospital, she was already up and about on crutches. Then, two weeks later, the studio where we recorded the disc burnt down. And then the graphic designer had spent 30 hours working on the cover. It was almost done, [when] his hard drive took a dump. He had to start all over again!

JOHNNY CAT: The album is cursed!

JOEY: Here's another crazy coincidence: one of the songs that we'd written, "Practicing for Suicide", has a line in it that says, "Take one step farther, you'll kiss a bus." Later, after Michelle had been in the accident, she told me about a conversation she'd had with her mom, and her mom had said to her, "That was before we knew you were going to try to kiss a truck." And I'd never heard anyone use that expression before, so it was really weird that I'd written it into the lyrics.

SKRATCH: Joey, you mentioned that you and Binky were really depressed when you wrote the songs on the record. Why were you so down?

BINKY: I was going through a divorce.

JOEY: Just the stresses and pressures of life—but it was everything dumped on me at once.

JOHNNY CAT: Yeah. "Visions of a Gun" pretty much describes Joey on his way to work every morning.

JOEY: People can relate. Everybody goes through tough times!

SKRATCH: What are your favorite songs on the disc?

JOEY: "Headcase" is my favorite. Also, "Snot-Nosed Brat".

JAY SIN: I agree. John lays down the drums ever so bootyliciously good on "Headcase". There's that little stutter at the beginning.

SKRATCH: I like "Headcase" a lot, too. Is there any kind of story behind it?

JOEY: I wrote it on a bet with a friend that I could write a song about anything. This friend's wife had one of those mannequin heads rolling around in the back of her car for a year. It was all scuffed and dirty and had a label on it that said "Susiekin." So [...] that's why the name "Susie" comes up in the song.

SKRATCH: Would any of the rest of you want to talk about your favorite songs on the record?

BINKY: "Nothing Left but Gravity" because of the way it really evolved. I woke up and wrote it one night a long time ago. Years later, I brought it in to practice. The music was stupid; but now it's got a jungle beat to it.

JOEY: Originally, it was very different from our stuff.

JOHNNY CAT: Me and Pep were adamantly against it at first.

BINKY: Another song that changed a lot was "Practicing for Suicide". It began with very different guitar licks.

JOEY: I wrote it. The original was totally different, and John didn't like it at first. It was too strange. Then Steve wrote the second half, and we liked it.

BINKY: "Checking Out" is an interesting song. There's one point where the person has died, and musically everything just starts going crazy.

JOHNNY CAT: I think that part is just a good, droning beat to thrash to.

SKRATCH: I'm a bit confused about the new CD, because you gave me a copy, but I believe that you only printed several hundred. When is the full run going to be done?





JOEY: Our fans thrashed the bathrooms. But we're just part of a long list [of bands who] can't play there. Some other bands on the list are The Casualties and The Voids.

JOHNNY CAT: We've set up our distribution through Puke & Vomit in Fullerton. JOEY: We'll tour if we can get our schedules matched up. But that's been a problem in the past, because we all have families, school bills, house payments, and jobs.

NICK: They still book plenty of hardcore shows.

SKRATCH: When is the band's next show?

SKRATCH: I know, but I think the fans are older at the hardcore shows and there isn't as much vandalism.

JOEY: October 5 we'll be playing at the Henry Fonda Theatre in Hollywood at the fundraiser for Grisham for Governor. It's so great to play with The Adolescents and

NICK: The punk-rock lads

## "OUR FANS THRASHED THE BATHROOMS. BUT WE'RE JUST PART OF A LONG LIST [OF BANDS WHO] CAN'T PLAY THERE."

JOEY: We did a first run of 300. We already had a CD-release show lined up, but we couldn't get the cover printed in time, so we had to change it, and it ended up as a D.I.Y. project at Kinko's. It actually cost us more. But that's our whole history: doing things by necessity. We sold 200 that night at our CD-release show.

SKRATCH: I heard that Narcoleptic Youth is banned from playing at Chain Reaction in Anaheim. Why?

JAY SIN: They can't handle their patrons and blamed it on us.

just don't give a fuck.

JOEY: I know that the Anaheim police were always giving them a hard time about the drinking in the parking lot at the punk shows.

SKRATCH: The new CD is done, you're just waiting for the finished copies, so what's next for Narcoleptic Youth? What will you do to promote it?

JOHNNY CAT: We're getting our new practice place set up, so then we'll practice and get back into shape.

JAY SIN: We'll play some shows and do some mild advertising.

T.S.O.L.  
I never thought I'd get to see them perform, much less get to play with them.

SKRATCH: I feel the same way about getting to see those old-school bands, too. Thanks for taking the time to talk.

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The Bled  
By Rich Balling and Charlene Rogers

Hardcore, metalcore, grindcore, screamo, emo—what does it all mean? Too many haters with time on their hands? Or too many pseudo-marketing gurus in cheap Italian suits who still use the phrase "This band is dynamite!" No matter: The Bled (from Tucson, AZ) is here to clean up shop, to put the math back into rock and the metal back into core. No label is strong enough to contain such a well-oiled machine. First, read this interview and befriend the warped genius of vocalist James Muñoz. Second, go out and buy their new CD *PASS THE FLASK* (Fiddler Records) and understand why, no matter how oversaturated any scene might become, the handful of bands which actually possess talent will outlive all ignorant classifications.

**SKRATCH:** What sparked the title of your new CD, *PASS THE FLASK*?

**JAMES:** Living in Tucson, AZ. It's a hot desert city where 80% of the kids who live here hate it and are trying to leave. I don't really hate it, but there's definitely this sense of "I'm going to be stuck here forever"—specifically if you're trying to do something outside of college. The music scene here is very bar-band supportive. There are a few really good bands from Tucson that actually get out and tour and put out decent records; but for the most part it's a college town, and people want to hear cover bands while they're drinking dollar drafts. It can be a little discouraging. We play all-ages shows. We do it for the kids. Our live shows are way too dangerous for the older Tucson crowd, anyway. Sometimes the kids lose interest, and it seems like it'd be so easy to say "fuck it" and give up on music for good. Anyway, to make a long ramble longer, *PASS THE FLASK* is about being at a shitty place in life and drinking away your paycheck, but still having friends around you that are in the same position. So, it's not entirely hopeless, but it's still kind of a bum-out.

**SKRATCH:** Was it a struggle to get attention being from a smaller city like Tucson?

**JAMES:** I think it's a constant struggle to get attention and to get people to listen to you, and hopefully touring accomplishes some of that; but for the most part it doesn't seem like kids give a fuck where you come from as long as they can get into your live show. Maybe some people will hear that we're from Tucson and NOT come to a show—but those people can spend the rest of their lives sitting on a soiled rug playing with their disease-ridden genitals for all I care.

**SKRATCH:** How did the Fiddler deal go down?

**JAMES:** Like a Saigon whore: cheap and thorough.

**SKRATCH:** Time changes and breakdowns seem to be your specialty, setting you apart from the countless hardcore bands that jump around a lot to disguise the fact that they came from the same mold as 20 musically-disinclined other bands. Outline the writing process of The Bled and how the technical aspects of your music are born.

**JAMES:** Usually, Jeremy will come in with a guitar part and a few drum ideas, and the rest of the band builds upon that. We basically just work on songs in our practice space. Everyone has input, and if anyone has an idea, we'll always try it out. No matter who came up with something first, for the most part, the entire band [must be] satisfied with the end result. Sometimes songs will end up sounding better outside of the practice space, and so there is a lot of cutting, pasting, and borrowing from other songs that never made it. As far as time changes and breakdowns go, we certainly have a love for both, but I think we're just trying to keep things interesting without overdoing it or making them cheesy and obvious.

# THE BLEED



photography by ryan joseph shaughnessy

**SKRATCH:** How have you been inspired by the lyrics of bands or artists you grew up listening to?

**JAMES:** I think Ice Cube's *TODAY WAS A GOOD DAY* really gave me a raw, honest glimpse of the ghetto and life in the early '90s as a black man. He knew how to tell a story through lyrics. Steven Tyler made me want to be a frontman. Billie Joe made me pick up a guitar.

**SKRATCH:** What do you really want people to know about The Bled that you feel goes unnoticed?

**JAMES:** We will battle-rap the fuck out of anyone who steps to us. We roll dice.

**SKRATCH:** What measures do you take as a vocalist to make sure your voice doesn't go out on tour when you have shows nightly?

**JAMES:** Well, I've heard of a bunch of supposed techniques that work well for singers;

but since I'm screaming three-fourths of the time, I think I'm basically screwed as far as the long run is concerned. I try to warm up before every show. There is a major difference on the nights when I don't have time to warm up, and [singing without warming up] is something people should try to avoid. But this summer I never had my voice go out once, so I guess I'm doing something right. Or maybe it's just because this was our first tour. HA. I heard breathing steam is good for you. And I try to sing from the gut and not from the back of the throat. Also, drinking freezing cold water doesn't seem to help me too much; it sends my throat into shock. But that's just me.

**SKRATCH:** Your drummer is very impressive. What is his background?

**JAMES:** He's truly a born musician; it's in his blood. His dad was an almost-famous crooner, and his mother played keyboards in some pretty big bands. He didn't start playing drums until



The Bled started, and that was about two-and-a-half years ago. He's the kind of guy that can pick up any instrument and completely shred on it after a few months. He's Italian...and well-hung.

**SKRATCH:** Name one or two bands you feel are greatly underrated (past or present).

**JAMES:** Maybe they're not underrated in our circle of friends and acquaintances, but I think Jawbreaker is underrated by the general music-listening public. I think they've written some of the greatest indie-pop/rock songs ever. They deserve something—or at least Blake [does] for writing the best lyrics ever. I think he's still really good. I was at some show in Long

songs make me feel crazy, like I want to spontaneously combust in a slightly premeditated sort of way (if that makes any sense). Whatever—they're good.

### SKRATCH: Top three CDs for a desert island?

Radiohead's **THE BENDS**, Murder City Devils' **EMPTY BOTTLES**, **BROKEN HEARTS**, Elliott Smith's **XO**—you know, hopefully happy stuff that doesn't make you want to swallow sand until you die.

**SKRATCH:** Dream tour?

**JAMES:** Refused, Morris Day and the Time, D12, Everytime I Die, Manowar, Radiohead, The Mean Reds. It'll be like a festival. We'll call it **FESTHELL!** Norman Borlne will

thing like that.

**SKRATCH:** Where will hardcore stand five years from now?

JAMES: I'm not really sure. There will still be bands that play old-school-style fast, punk-influenced hardcore. There will still be mosh bands. I'm curious to see how hardcore will be influenced by bands like Norma Jean. I've always been a big fan of Botch and bands like that, bands that really fuck with you and pull out crazy math riffs. I hope things continue to get more and more challenging.

**"He's the kind of guy that can pick up any instrument and completely shred on it after a few months. He's Italian...and well-hung."**

Island, NY, and a dude handed me that fucking Jawbreaker tribute record that just came out because he's on it (he does one of the only good covers on that, the "Jet Black" cover). Anyway, we're talking Jawbreaker, and a few kids around us had no idea who the fuck they were. Sleater-Kinney is also underrated. I love their guitar playing and songwriting. I like them because I can't think of anyone else who sounds like them. They really have their own sound, and I think that's an accomplishment. Some of their

be the MC!

**SKRATCH:** Why are you doing this? Create a mission statement for your band.

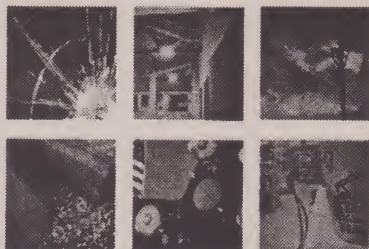
**JAMES:** To build character within our young boys and mold their spiritual beings so that they will have a positive consciousness and sensitivity about themselves and others with whom they come in contact, both within their own peer group and with adults in the community, their teachers, and others with whom they must interact...or some-

Like hardcore but getting tired of buying CDs that all end up sounding the same? The Bled is the real deal, and their new release **PASS THE FLASK** is a gem caught in the current of a tired scene. Go buy this CD and rediscover hardcore music as something that has integrity and can be listened to and enjoyed. [www.thebled.net](http://www.thebled.net)



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# DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE  
Interview by Tiffany Chow

It is difficult for Death Cab for Cutie to talk of their musical influences, so original are they. They are a band that inspires other music, kindles burning devotion in fans, and provokes intense anticipation for any of the band's tours or releases. A new album, *TRANSATLANTICISM*, will be released on Barsuk Records on October 7, and the national/Canadian tour that will soon follow. And with the recent unexpected and broad success of singer Benjamin Gibbard's side project The Postal Service, it will be no surprise if even more attention will be paid to Death Cab for Cutie now.

SKRATCH: Tell me your name, your age, and your role in Death Cab for Cutie.

BEN: My name is Benjamin Gibbard, I am 27, and I sing and play guitar for Death Cab for Cutie.

SKRATCH: How long has Death Cab for Cutie been together and making music?

BEN: Our first show was December of 1997, so I guess that makes almost six years now.

SKRATCH: In all those years, have you ever doubted what you were doing? Have you ever wished you had done something else?

BEN: No. You know, you kind of do other things when you're trying to make music your living. Luckily for us, we're able to make music for a living. So I guess the

whole time I've been trying to not do other things.

SKRATCH: If you weren't in Death Cab for Cutie, what would you be doing, and where would you be doing it?

BEN: I don't know. Those kind of questions are the kind [...] that I tend not to think about

too much, so I don't know if I have a good answer. I studied environmental chemistry in college, and I worked in a refinery testing stream/waste samples for a year in college, and then for a year after I graduated. I'd want to be doing anything other than that. It was kind of a glimpse into the harsh realities into the work world, especially in environments like that. It's like anywhere where people [are] in a union: people are there for 30 years. They get to the point where they want to do anything other than that. It becomes a pain in the ass. It was kind of a discouraging place to work.

SKRATCH: You have already somewhat ventured out of the band to explore other projects—for example, The Postal Service. You've experienced quite a bit of success with the release of The Postal Service's *GIVE UP*. Would you say that The Postal Service has become just as important to you as DCFC?

BEN: I feel really close to [...] anything that I've written. [...] One is not more important to me [than another]. Death Cab has always been my band; it's always been the main thing, and it will continue to be. [...] Death Cab is most important to me because it's been something that I've been working on for almost six years, so I have a lot more invested in it personally and emotionally than in The Postal Service; but it doesn't change the fact that I am proud of The Postal Service. I'm very excited about all the success that it's had [...].

SKRATCH: How does The Postal Service affect Death Cab? How does the band feel about it?

BEN: Everybody's really supportive. You know, Nick from Death Cab went on tour with The Postal Service, and Chris came to play guitar with us. [...] We're all really tight. Everybody is really excited to see the record do well. We've never been opportunists. It's not like just because The Postal Service record is doing well I am going to jump ship or something like that. The success is kind of a fluke...well not a fluke, but it was unexpected. Jimmy and I, when we went in to do the record, we thought we would do some touring, and we'll become really good friends. In a given year, all of us in Death Cab work on other things. While Chris is in the studio doing records, and when I am not writing stuff for Death Cab, I dabbled in things with Jimmy.

SKRATCH: Despite the work you did with Jimmy and the touring you did for *GIVE UP*, Death Cab has found time to put out a brand new full-length. First off, let me say that the album is impressive. It's less complex than your other albums, but brilliant in its simplicity. I also feel that it explores a poppier sound. Would you say that the album is different than your other albums in this way?

BEN: Being in the center of everything, it's hard to get perspective on the scope of your work as a band. I think that there are moments on the record that are some of the poppier moments that we've had. I think it's just more to the point. On the previous records, there has been a lot of meandering that at the time we thought was something interesting. As we get more into music, I think we admire when people get to the point with the song and not muck it up. There's no reason for there to be three minutes of guitar at the end of a song if nothing happens. I think as we've continued to work in music it just makes more sense to focus on songs and make it more to the point—and if it comes out more





I've just been through some difficult stuff. With that being said, I just found someone I'm really excited about for the first time in a long time. It's strange to rehearse this record to go on tour, [because now] I don't feel akin to the person who wrote a lot of that material. [...] As me and Chris once said: your songs are like past views. You write a song, and when you perform it, it's going to be with you forever. It reminds you of a time you had or a person you knew, and I think that's a good thing, because [then] it sticks with you longer. You can photograph a person in words

for the first time ever we're taking a bus on tour. It'll be really nice to not have to worry about driving anymore and to be able to get to towns early enough to actually see our friends and have the tour be a lot easier on us physically than ever before. And we're playing longer sets. We have only one opening band. That I'm really excited about [...].

SKRATCH: On this tour, you will be making one stop in Los Angeles. On track 4 of THE PHOTO ALBUM, you spoke very clearly of your opinions of the city. Are you dreading returning, or have your

## "BEING IN THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING, IT'S HARD TO GET PERSPECTIVE ON THE SCOPE OF YOUR WORK AS A BAND"

poppy, then that's good. I am really proud of the record. I think we picked up where we left off with WE HAVE THE FACTS..., as far as trying to do more recording stuff and just photographing the song as it lies.

SKRATCH: Regardless of whether or not it is more poppy than the previous albums, the lyrics still have a very cynical take on life. TRANSATLANTICISM talks a lot more about disappointment in romance, broken relationships, and corrupted love. Why is this?

BEN: I think that with every writing cycle I go through, as much of it is coming from my own imagination as is coming from my personal life. The last couple years have been kind of difficult. Since the release of THE PHOTO ALBUM,

like that. It makes for a better memory.

SKRATCH: DCFC will be leaving on a national tour in support of the new album. Are you looking forward to it?

BEN: I'm really looking forward to it for a number of reasons. Since the last record we purposely never took out new songs and played them live. (Well, we played a couple of them on the last little jaunt we did in the spring, but that was only 10 shows long.) So we have an entire record of fresh material that we've never played before; and we're bringing back some material that we haven't played in years. It's really exciting to have a good 13 or 14 songs that we haven't played—some we haven't played ever, and some that we haven't played in so long that they've become new to us. Also, it's a really big tour; and

sentiments changed?

BEN: I still get a really smarmy feel whenever I go to L.A. Obviously, [from] being friends with Jimmy and working with him, I've spent more time there. There are some things I like about it; but just getting around in L.A. is so crazy; and there are so many strip malls. Everything just seems so unkempt. It takes leaving and coming back to realize it. Death Cab was in Australia this summer. We flew into LAX before we flew back to Seattle. After spending three weeks in this beautifully pristine place and then sinking down into L.A. through this layer of smog, it's like, "Oh my god, it's so filthy—how do you breathe in this place?" I still kind of stand behind my original sentiments. But, you know, it's not the place, it's the people that makes you fall in love with a place. I have a lot of friends down

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there, and I love visiting them, so, you know....

**SKRATCH:** Your publicist mentioned that the band was having a video shot in L.A. in early September, but that none of the members would be present. Why is this?

**BEN:** The guy who is making the video for us is somebody we don't really know, and he's friends with this kid Josh, who made the last video we recorded. I think that as of yet we haven't been presented with a performance-video idea. The videos with performances in it are always so horrible, you know? It's so hard. I kind of don't want to make a performance video until someone comes up with something or we come up with something that's not going to be offensive. Josh at Barsuk is like, "You guys HAVE to make a video that you're in because MTV is starting to not want to play stuff unless you're in it"—which is understandable. I think there's something nice about having somebody make video for you that you're not in, because it's a whole level of music business that's another hassle—along with everything else that it takes to be a band. I think the next video we'll probably be in, [...] but we'll wait for a video that's not just cheesy and has a band in it.

**SKRATCH:** What song off the new album will be the first single?

**BEN:** "The New Year" [...].

**SKRATCH:** DCFC is well-established and well-known. It seems like the obvious next step would be to go major. Will we be seeing this video or hearing the single or reading more of DCFC in the mainstream with the release of this new album?

**BEN:** We've done some press with larger magazines than before, but it all depends on people's opinions of the record. So far, it seems that people are liking the record—which is good. I guess we'll find out when it's had more time.

**SKRATCH:** Lastly, DCFC's music has always been unlike anything else available. Are you influenced by any other artists at all? If so, who are they and how do they influence the music?

**BEN:** We all listen to a lot of different stuff, but the kind of people that we'd all agree on are like Red House Painters. We all love Peter Dinklage. I love Teenage Fanclub; it's one of my favorite all-time bands. One person we've all been really into lately is Gillian Welch—you know, old Deadhead [...] Influences are always a kind of tricky question, because you're being influenced all the time; it always changes. It's like when

someone asks me for my favorite five records: I can never remember. It's like going into a record store and you forget what you want. It's the same thing with influences or favorite records: I can't keep a list that long in my head.

There is no question in my mind that Death Cab for Cutie deserve every ounce of praise and acclaim that they receive. Coupling musical brilliance with honesty and humility, Ben and the rest of the band produce an image and sound that is candid and approachable without ever losing its genius. The new album TRANSATLANTICISM reemphasizes this, and hopefully the band will continue to put out records this accomplished.



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Motion City Soundtrack  
Interview by Scott Presant  
Introduction by Tiffany  
Chow

When you think of bands like Motion City Soundtrack—who are enjoying increasing success, a new album that is receiving massive amounts of praise

## MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK

and was released from one of the most renowned indie labels around—you wouldn't really think of them as being insecure or down to earth. But as uncanny as it seems, this is Motion City Soundtrack—unsure of their abilities, unsure of their future, and unsure of their success...but positive about their chemistry as a band, their present position, and their goals.

JUSTIN: My name is Justin Pierre, and I have cheese in my mouth, and I play guitar and sing in Motion City Soundtrack, the rock band.

JOSH: [I'm] Joshua Cane, and I play guitar

SKRATCH: Cool, cool. So you guys are from Minneapolis, right?

JUSTIN: Minneapolis, Minneapolis, Minneapolis. Long day, long day....

SKRATCH: [Laughs] This is your second label, right?

JUSTIN: Well, we weren't officially on a label before. A friend of ours put out something that we did—like, we co-put it out.

JOSH: Really all he did was distribute it. We just handed out the record.

JUSTIN: He paid for everything, and then he put his name on it. Actually, [we] lived with the guy. He lived in the basement of the house...Actually, his office was in the basement of the house that we lived in. [It was a] small room, about half the size of this.

SKRATCH: You were just in high school bands before this, right?

JUSTIN: Yeah, nothing notable.

JOSH: Definitely not.

JUSTIN: Like, well, you've played in more bands than I have. I think I've only really played in one band before this one.

JOSH: I had a band called Saddest Girl Story. I played bass. It made it on THE EMO DIARIES.

SKRATCH: Oh, did it really? That's cool, then!

JOSH: That band was only around for six months, then [we] broke up, and I started playing with him [i.e., Justin] as our singer; and then that broke up more, and then me and him continued to play together, basically.

SKRATCH: Oh, wow. I heard that you, Justin, were not a talkative guy. You seem pretty talkative. Are you in a good mood today? What's going on?

JUSTIN: I have several split personalities. No, I'm just kidding. Who said that? Or was it just somewhere you read? Somebody said something about soft-spoken. I'm not really soft-spoken. I would say [I'm] abrasive and up-front.

JOSH: I would say at one point in his life he was very quiet—and

not because he was, like, shy. It was just that he didn't let things out.

SKRATCH: Being in the band kind of help you let it all out, you think?

JUSTIN: I think so. I mean, you know, just...Some of it is, like, you're up there and you're performing for people, so you're sort of not exactly 100% you, maybe, or you're channeling something more. I don't know. That sounds kind of weird. Yeah, it's all about love and hugs. [Laughs] I like to talk. I think I talk too much, actually. I'm going to shut up now. I'm not saying a word.

SKRATCH: It seems like your lyrics are kind of being amusing, but also being kind of serious. You kind of make a stab at certain things, like society in "The Future Freaks Me Out". It seems like everybody likes that song. It's just really, really catchy and quirky and clever. Is it a song poking fun at how people are into stupid/materialistic things or who get into a relationship just because they both can "dance to the beat" and stuff? I mean, I know it's probably not that literal, but is it kind of like a jab at what people are into and how cheesy mainstream society is?

JUSTIN: I think a lot of it, too, is that I tend to reference a certain time and place with certain items like...things that I remember growing up, and a lot of it had to do with, like [...] being a kid in the '80s. As far as that song, we were talking about this, growing up, becoming old—[how] we're not really that old, but we're older than most people, but we're still not old. It's like seeing all the stuff that you just don't really get coming out of music, movies, television...I don't even know what...fruit juice—you know, just anything that's just not the same as the original, and like starting to understand the gap between my parents and me getting smaller. I don't know.

SKRATCH: Do you think you're closer to your parents than kids these days?

JUSTIN: No, no. I guess what I'm saying is—

JOSH: You're fucking backfiring on this comment. Goddamn.

SKRATCH No, that's okay.

JOSH: We don't really answer questions.

JUSTIN: I'm trying to, but I'm not very good at it.

JOSH: At the same time it's about, like, being in that moment, you know what I mean? being in the moment and realizing that that's dumb—but then realizing that you have something to do, whatever that is.

JUSTIN: I guess you could say living in the moment is much better than living in the past or the future.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] I'm a little confused now, but it's okay. I definitely got the wrong interpretation. That's okay. That's good. At least I know a little bit.

JOSH: We don't like to tell you.

JUSTIN: Somebody asked me if Betty was a prostitute, and then



somebody else asked me if Betty was [...] Betty Page.  
 JOSH: Betty Page—I remember that name, [but] I don't remember who that is. That was interesting. I just smiled and wrinkled my eyebrows.

**SKRATCH: Oh, really?**

JUSTIN: Hopefully. I still have plans. The guy who shot our video is actually a friend of mine, and we keep trying to get together. We've got a script that we've been working on for almost a year here, but we never have time. So, we're planning on shooting. I have to get on that.

JUSTIN: That sounds funny.

JOSH: I'd like to be. [Laughs] I'd never admit to being that, but I'd like to be. We all went to school for different things. We all tried to do different things other than music, but it's like we all needed to do music. Maybe that is better, maybe it's crappy. Maybe we are crappy. I don't know if I'm a good guitar player, because I have no idea how to play guitar.

**SKRATCH: What people have you met while being in a band that have greatly impacted you?**

JOSH: Well, it's like...it's just friends. It's people all over. All the bands we've met. Our friends All-American Rejects, Limbeck, The Sugarcult—all these bands that are now our great friends. James of The Get-Up Kids, those are really nice [people]. Everywhere—just random things, like now we're meeting people, randomly....



**"I have several split personalities. No, I'm just kidding. Who said that? Or was it just somewhere you read?"**

**SKRATCH: [Laughs]** It's good to wrinkle your eyebrows. So, as far as your audience, right now it seems very, very young. You guys are mid 20s?

JOSH: That's good enough.

**SKRATCH: What kind of stuff do you guys like doing besides music?**

JUSTIN: Now? Nothing. I want to do lots of things. Someday I want to make movies. [...]

**SKRATCH:**

**That's one of your passions?**

JOSH: Some guys make movies, and they suck, but it's cool if he wants to make them. That's a huge influence on my writing, too. Books are my default. You're working on movies, and you become a better songwriter by accident.

**SKRATCH: You are a writer, basically—that's kind of like your thing?**

JUSTIN: I know I'm not a great guitar player. I'm very sloppy.

**SKRATCH: Well, as a singer you don't have to play guitar THAT great, you know. No, I'm just kidding—you're a good guitarist. I'm just messing with you.**

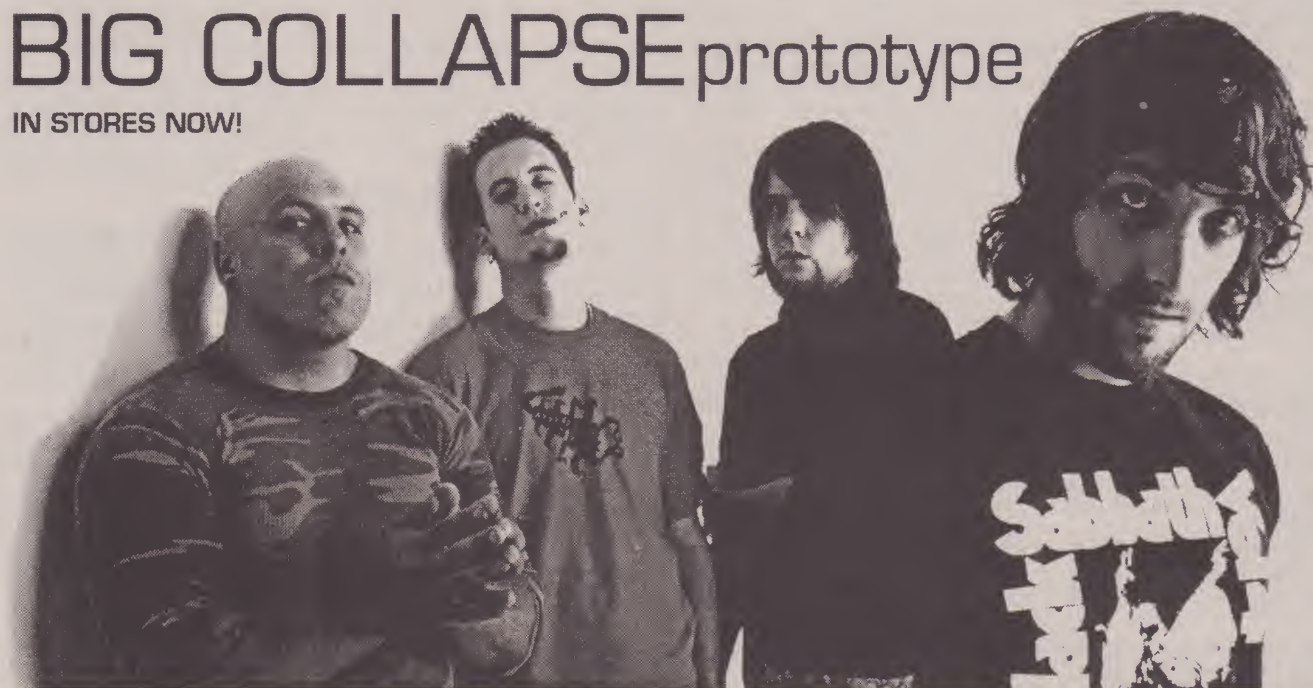
JUSTIN: Ah, fucker.

JUSTIN: Yeah, and like, a long time ago, it was like "Oh, these people are so huge and way up there." Even as a kid thinking "Oh, Jawbox is so, like, way up there." [Now] it's like suddenly they're more touchable, approachable. It's just so weird.

JOSH: How are you going to decipher this?

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**SKRATCH:** I don't know. I'm not going to transcribe this; I'll have someone else. I think half the interview is you guys going "Well, ah, I don't know what I'm saying."

**JUSTIN:** Actually, every interview we do, every paragraph or statement that we say, ends with that.

**JOSH:** I'm really trying to not say the exact same things, because that's just boring. [...]

**SKRATCH:** What's one of your good tour stories? Anything wacky?

**JUSTIN:** [...] Our fun tour stories just kind of consist of us driving through the night aimlessly.

**JOSH:** You got one kill.

**JUSTIN:** Oh yeah. I hit an elk on our way from Seattle just driving really early in the morning. [I was] half-awake, [and I] took my glasses off for a second, put 'em down, [and I] was going to rub my eyes, and all of sudden an elk came from the left, jumped over the median, and I hit it. I just hit it's head, so it didn't really, make us have any major issues, but I don't think it survived very much. It really sucked.

That's my first kill. Motion City Soundtrack style seems to be, like, we do stuff [that's] supposed to be dangerous [or] terrible things, but we come out okay.

**JOSH:** Like the 180?

**JUSTIN:** No, 360. A 360 on the freeway going 75 miles per hour, with a trailer, in a van. We somehow landed in a ditch.

**JOSH:** And drove out of it. It was like, "Okay."

**SKRATCH:** Wow, thank God you guys were okay.

**JOSH:** [It] scared the crap out of us. Barely survived that.

**JUSTIN:** I had a panic attack afterwards. Like, during it was great, and I was like, "Wow, we're spinning." It was a serene sort of experience. But afterwards the anticipation of it happening again was just too much.

**JOSH:** And I was going like 30 miles an hour [afterwards].

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] It makes you a little paranoid, huh?

**JUSTIN:** Yeah. Other stories, like beer and girls and...guys. Rubber bands, latex: Nutella...

**SKRATCH:** Ah, yes. Is Nutella that stuff that...

**JUSTIN:** Jam. We had that in Europe for the first time.

**JOSH:** We had it last night at the crêpes place.

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] Any weird female fans obsessed with you guys? Anything crazy?

**JOSH:** No, but there's a fan in L.A. who came to one of our shows and saw this girl that Justin was talking to and, like, "really obsessed

about her and sends us e-mails asking for her [...] saying, like, "Do you know who this is, 'cause I don't know if you know her, but if you do, I want her phone number 'cause I want to talk to her because I fell in love at first sight."

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] So, what are your favorite tracks on the album? Do you have any favorites?

**JOSH:** I don't know. I really like "Mary Without a Sound".

**JUSTIN:** I like every song for what it's got. Every song had a specific different time and place. The record was written in over four-and-a-half years.

**JOSH:** [It's the culmination] of processed music that you listen to, 20 years worth of music. Well, I don't know. I'm trying to say something like, It's all regurgitated music that we listen to, sucking it in.

**JUSTIN:** You're saying the same thing.

**JOSH:** No, I'm saying it in a different way.

**JUSTIN:** But you're saying the same thing is what I'm saying!

**JOSH:** Not exactly.

[wanting] to sign you. It's not just some suit that's paid by someone else [...].

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] Yeah, exactly: Do you mind telling me some other labels that were checking you out?

**JOSH:** Universal was one. Universal we probably would have signed [with]. We had a lot of offers—you know, like, Triple Crown Records was interested. Drive-Thru made an offer to us in a parking lot in L.A. There was a few others.

**JUSTIN:** It [was] so awesome, too, like, the whole Epitaph thing. If I remember correctly Universal and Epitaph were pretty similar.

**JOSH:** Well, at least [...] talking to them they're pretty similar. Then when it came in paper, the Universal [contract] was different. [With] Epitaph, everything that they said was on paper; nothing was a lie. It's such a weird world, because [...] when you're in a band and there's all this major-label crap and all of a sudden major labels are interested in your band, it starts getting weird. You forget what's what and how things work, and you

**SKRATCH:** Oh, you should listen to some Knapsack. They really have that type of lyrics: story-telling, but really clever, really good stuff.

**JUSTIN:** I like Ben Folds, too. He's so funny, just goofy. People who can make fun of themselves, I love that. I think that if you can't do that, [...] you've like sort of grown up or something—too much maybe.

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] When I was watching you guys, what you were talking about was kind of reflected in what I was thinking: Could Motion City be a band without your singing and without your writing?

**JUSTIN:** I don't know if we could be a band without any of us, because [each of us] adds so much to the band. [...] Josh and I have been trying to play music for so long, and we had different people who we worked with, and for one reason or another either they left or we kicked them out. We finally found the right people with Matt, Tony, and Jesse. I think that they all add something very particular.



**JUSTIN:** Sort of.

**JOSH:** I'm going to disagree with you. That's the way I look at it. I don't know. All bands are just imitating what they...What I'm saying is we're just regurgitating what we listen to. I might listen to a part of one of our songs and be like, That is a Poster Children rip-off.

**JUSTIN:** But the reason we write stuff is based on...you know, I play guitar part, you play guitar—you know, just something that goes, "Oh, that's cool!" We don't know why we said that. Maybe it's because we heard it before; maybe because it's just like something else.

**SKRATCH:** I think there were other labels checking you out at a certain point. It was kind of like a rush of different labels.

**JOSH:** Yeah, madness. We were getting offers in parking lots. We were just really happy that Mr. Burewitz came and showed his face.

**JUSTIN:** He has yet to hear us, um, since...

**JOSH:** [...] He hasn't gone to any of our shows [since he signed us].

**JUSTIN:** He saw us before he signed us. My voice was totally shot, too. It was like our worst show. Luckily, he had the album to reference. That's another thing, too: he runs this company, and he knows what it's like to play music.

**JOSH:** It's just different when you have this situation with all these labels, and one of the labels that's interested [...] also [has] the owner

really need someone to just sit down and tell you what's happening.

**JUSTIN:** That's another thing, too. Eli from Girls Against Boys was a huge help and [helped us with] everyone that we ever worked with, [such as] management...  
**JOSH:** He helped us get a lawyer.

**SKRATCH:** So how would you tie in movies, going into movie-writing...?

**JUSTIN:** I think this is another thing where I'm going to use something I said before. Tom Waits, I think, is a lyrical genius. Ben Folds is a lyrical genius/ Tim Kasher from Cursive, John Samson from The Weakerthans—like, they paint pictures, they tell stories—they're more like storytellers than singers. No offense to other singers who write lyrics, but some of their words...I just don't really like their word choice-age. With those four in particular, like, they never let you down. It's like, "Holy shit!" Either that's the way I feel, or it's like I totally have this movie or scene painted in my head that way. [...] Being a big movie freak [...] I try to do that. I think I fail more than I succeed, but, you know, I'm trying to do that because the thing that I hate most is just the words, because you can have an awesome band that's just like doing something totally original, and then the words can suck, and then it kind of ruins it. [...]

**JOSH:** Granted, a lot of the music that was on the record was not written by them, but they took it and made it their own. And you know, four or five of the songs were actually written by all of us together.

**SKRATCH:** So the band's a unit?

**JUSTIN:** Yeah. [If] somebody left or something, I don't think we would probably continue to play. I could say that now, but I don't know what will happen.

**SKRATCH:** But hopefully all will go well. What's a lyric that you've written that's just a line that you really like or feel, "I'm surprised I wrote that line" or "I'm glad I wrote that line"? Is there anything that sticks in your head or when your singing that's just really explosive to you?

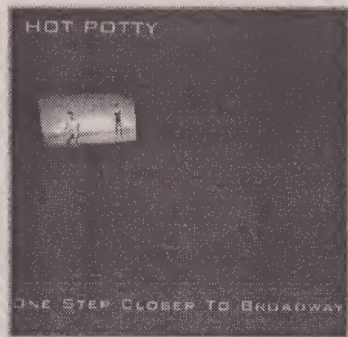
**JUSTIN:** Stuff that I really like that I've written, I often will be like, But I totally just ripped off this person here or that person there. I think there's a song called "Indoor Living", and I think a lot of those...I remember at the moment I was just sitting in the bar, so I wrote that song over the course of several evenings [...] I tend to go to certain places...I don't know. I'm sounding kind of weird, artsy.

Despite their uncertainties and laid-back attitude, this band is going places fast. They are already receiving due praise and expected attention, but it is clear that it won't stop here. Fortunately, the band is open to what awaits them. Check them out on [www.epitaph.com](http://www.epitaph.com).



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# MADBALL

Madball

Interview by Melissa Wong

It's hot. And I cannot move because there are SO many people here. I'm standing by the bar sweating like crazy. I'm inside CBGB in New York City for Madball's April 13th show, and it's packed like a can of sardines. Madball played an amazing show, and Agnostic Front's Vinny Stigma made a surprise appearance, jumping on stage to join the hardcore madness. Madball's latest album on Epitaph Records, **HOLD IT DOWN**, was released in 2001, just before the band decided to go their separate ways. After the "thought-to-be-permanent break-up" in 2001, the guys from Madball are back and ready to rock more than ever.

I was really lucky to speak with lead singer Freddy Cricien after the show. The previous day I had spoken to him on the phone about the importance of family and realizing what the music is all about: your roots. Here's the interview:

**SKRATCH: Who is in Madball?**

**CRICIEN:** I'm Freddy, and I sing. We have Hoya on the bass, Mitts on guitar, and Riggs Ross on drums.

**SKRATCH: Where is everyone from originally?**

**CRICIEN:** We're all from New York. I was born in Jersey, lived in Florida for a while, but mainly I represent New York. The rest of the guys were born and raised in New York. I'm not sure exactly where Riggs was born—somewhere upstate.

**SKRATCH: So you guys had a bit of a break-up a couple years ago. How did it happen?**

**CRICIEN:** Yeah, it was toward the end of 2000 or early 2001...somewhere around there. We were just having problems. Having been around a while, there was a lot of drama, drama with the other guys' personal issues, and it just got overwhelming. We had to ask ourselves, "Is it worth it?" And at the time we felt that it just wasn't.

**SKRATCH: So what made you guys decide to come back?**

**CRICIEN:** Well, you want to remember the good, you know, the...ahhh, shit. [Beeps in the background] Hold on a second. [Pause] Hello? Okay. Sorry. Damn fire alarm. [Laughs] It's a pain in the ass.

**SKRATCH: [Laughs] It's cool. Ours here does that, too. But anyways, you were saying about why you wanted to come back....**

**CRICIEN:** Oh yeah. Well, we just like...I guess the time we had off made us think about what we know. We didn't go to college because we chose this. We're young, and we needed time to

think. Me and Hoya are the last of the original line-up. Riggs and Mitts are our good friends, and as musicians we all decided that this was what we wanted to do. So things fell into place from there.

**SKRATCH: Yeah, kind of like a relationship, right? [Laughs] You leave it, and then you realize what you were missing out on, or missed.**

**CRICIEN:** Yeah. [Laughs] Good example.

**SKRATCH: What will Madball be doing for the rest of 2003?**

**CRICIEN:** From the end of June to July Europe has a lot of festivals going on, so we have many festival and club dates. We've got three weeks, and we're trying to put together a good album.

**SKRATCH: So tell me about your last album, **HOLD IT DOWN**. It was on Epitaph, right?**

**CRICIEN:** Yeah. Well, overall, we still have room to grow. The break we had was a good break. But **HOLD IT DOWN** was our most mature record. [It featured] a little bit of every element; I think it defines our sound. If you had me pick, I'd pick it as our best record.

**SKRATCH: What's in your CD player right now?**

**CRICIEN:** Actually, I listen to a lot of stuff. Some 50 Cent, The Cranberries.... It's weird: I listen to everything. But right now I would

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have to say Hazen St. It's a project I'm involved in. There are two songs for some compilations. It's a project with Toby from H2O, Chad from New Found Glory, and Dave from Box Car Racer. But yeah, I would have to say that's what's in my CD player. I was just listening to a couple of the tracks....

**SKRATCH:** What are five albums you can't live without?

**CRICIEN:** Well...hmmm. Agnostic Front's VICTIM OF PAIN. That's the real shit. It symbolizes a lot in my life. That's what got me into

airports sometimes fans recognize you, and that's definitely a cool feeling. I mean, if I can make this my career, then it's what I want to do. I didn't exactly pick this; it's like second nature. It's great because it's something I've grown up with, and it's always been a big part of my life. All the traveling we've done has been amazing. You get to see a lot of cultures.

**SKRATCH:** How do the crowds in the U.S. differ from the European crowds?

I'm such a geek.) [Laughs]

**CRICIEN:** I wear Michael Jordan shoes, because they help me jump around. [Laughs] But really, though, I do a lot of jumping around on stage. I have Air Jordans, Nike Uptowns—you know, the basics. And Adidas.

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] Of course.

**CRICIEN:** Hey, if I get free shoes, I'll rock 'em! Anything that's free. [Laughs] I don't discriminate!

## "THAT'S THE REAL SHIT. IT SYMBOLIZES A LOT IN MY LIFE. THAT'S WHAT GOT ME INTO HARDCORE"

hardcore. But if I had to pick, I would definitely pick something hip-hop, maybe a Latin record...Um, that's a good question. I don't know.... Coldplay is amazing....

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] Yeah, Coldplay's new album is amazing. What do you enjoy most about being a musician?

**CRICIEN:** We're in a hardcore band, [Laughs] so it doesn't really get that much hype. I mean, it's kind of weird, but if I were some kind of rock star, it'd be different. But it is cool, though. Like at the

**CRICIEN:** [Laughs] Besides the language, I mean, they're hardcore kids. Actually, hardcore in general is bigger in Europe. It's more widely accepted, I guess you could say. I don't know if they appreciate it more or if it's just on a bigger scale over there, but Europe as a whole is pretty consistent [in terms of the hardcore scene being big]. Kids are the same here and there, you know—maybe except for the politics.

**SKRATCH:** What kind of shoes do you wear? (I love asking this, just because it's cool to find out.

**SKRATCH:** Roger from Agnostic Front is your older brother—and he has had a profound influence on you, right? You hung out with them at practice, and you'd jump on stage at their shows as a little kid. Tell me about how Madball started. It has been around for quite some years now, but how long has the band been together?

**CRICIEN:** Well, Madball the concept has been around since 1988. It was more like a project at that point. I was like 12 or 13. We did a 7" in 1989. I was just a



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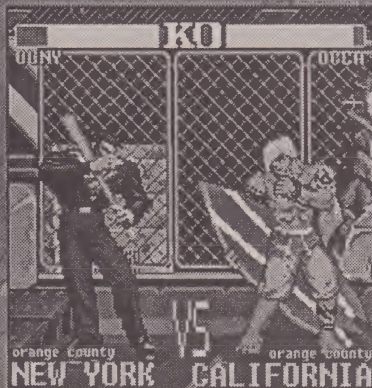


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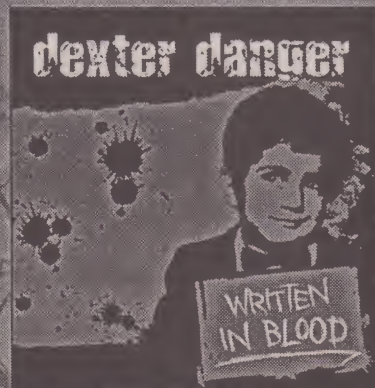


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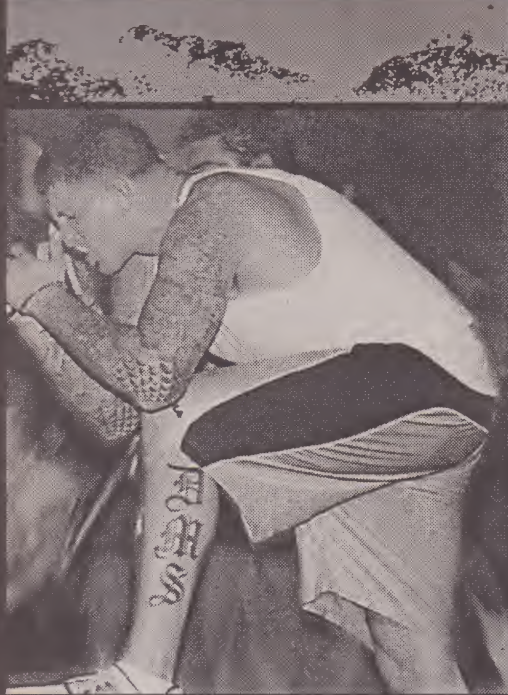
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kid, but it was a side project with my brother Roger. It was a fun thing. We would have a show here and there, but nothing major. Then in the early 1990s stuff actually started. We began to tour, get our stuff together as a band....

**SKRATCH:** That's cool, that your older brother was an influence. The age difference between my siblings and me is quite a few years, too. Sometimes I treat my little sister more like a friend instead of treating her like an older sister would. Do you think the amount of years between siblings plays a big part in how you grow up?

**CRICIEN:** Well, he's 12 years older. I'm 27 and he's 39, going to be 39. Yeah, I think it does, definitely.

**SKRATCH:** Do you think that older siblings help you develop as an individual?

**CRICIEN:** Oh yeah. You gain respect for them. I have two older brothers, one older sister, and two little sisters. But some are like half [-siblings], you know?

**SKRATCH:** Cool, a family of six. Nice big family. [Laughs]

**CRICIEN:** [Laughs] Yeah. I mean, my older brother Rudy was more like a father figure. Roger was more punk rock—like a friend with tattoos who was like, "Hey, cool, what's up?" I mean, I'm friends with all my brothers, but Rudy's more like a dad.

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] I know what you mean. Like "Hey, Roger, you want to kick back and get some beers?" And with Rudy it would be like, "So, uh, you want to, um, read the paper? They have a new crossword in the FYI section." Right? [Laughs] Just kidding.

**CRICIEN:** [Laughs] Yeah, well, now I got to watch what I say. [Laughs]

**SKRATCH:** [Laughs] I know. But family is so important. My mom's birthday was last Thursday, and she called and was so happy to have gotten her birthday card—on time. [Laughs] I felt like such a dork, but I miss her, you know?

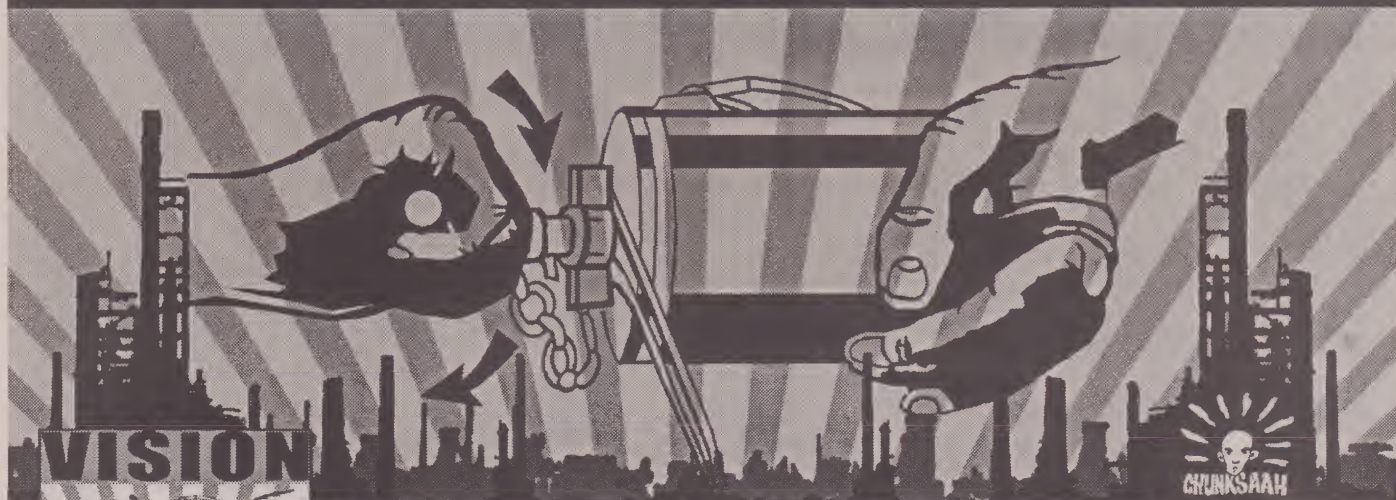
**CRICIEN:** Awww. Well, you tell her happy birthday for me! [Laughs] Yeah, family's real important. I have family in Florida, down south, and some up here. They're good to have close, definitely.

**SKRATCH:** Alright. Well, thanks for taking the time to speak with me. Any last comments?

**CRICIEN:** Well, good luck with the interview. For all the fans out there, get ready, because Madball is back! [Laughs]

Madball will be doing a three-week European tour this summer (with Most Precious Blood and Born from Pain), and they are currently working on a new album. And just so you know, if you send Freddy free shoes, he'll rock 'em. Cool, huh? Thanks, Freddy. Good luck with the tour! For more information on Madball's tour dates, check out .

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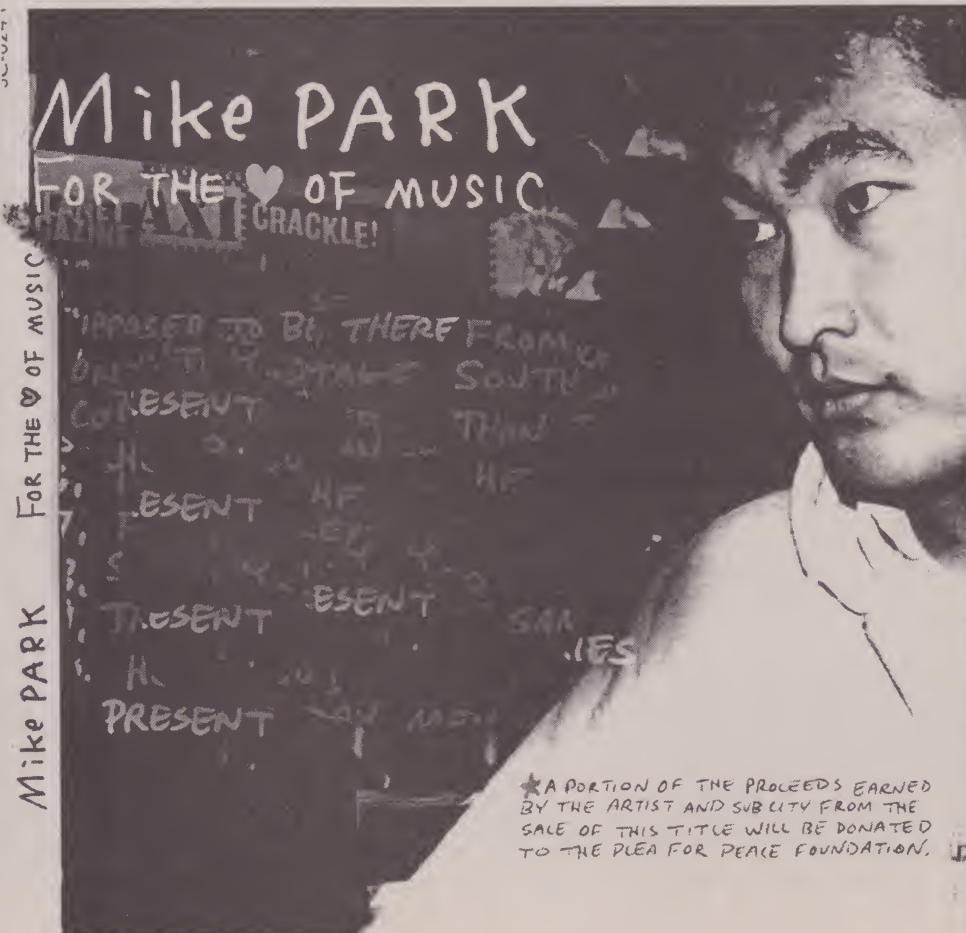


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# THE AQUABATS!

The Aquabats  
By John Woods

Contrary to popular belief, The Aquabats did not die out with the ska movement of the late '90s. Maybe the ska influences are not as noticeable nowadays, but the music is still as wacky and fun as anyone can remember. For those people who have never been introduced to the zaniness of The Aquabats theatrical music, it's doubtful that you've ever experienced anything so weird and downright funny. Adorning themselves in costumes that consist of rash guards, board shorts, and anti-negativity helmets (among a various other assortment of props), The Aquabats are humanity's answer to the dark forces that permeate the Earth. They are more than mere men; and they certainly aren't just ANY Aquabats—they are THE Aquabats, and it is their goal to bring justice and happiness in both music and the world! Starting out near the beaches of Southern California and slowly expanding onward to the deepest reaches of all the land, they have made their impact. Their job has not always been easy, though, and that is why they turned to the kids for that extra bit of support. They have a huge list of "Aquacadets"—some say more than 10,000 strong. The Aquabats are, indeed, ever-growing. In fact, the band is going just as strong as ever...just maybe a little older. But who's counting? With age comes wisdom—and that's what this interview is all about.

I got the grand opportunity to sit down, relax, and enjoy some laughs with The Aquabats frontman The MC Bat Commander and guitarist Prince Adam before their show at the Glasshouse in Pomona on August 8th, 2003.

**SKRATCH:** You guys have a DVD coming out soon. Can you tell the kids a little about it?  
**MCBC:** Oh, CAN we. Well, it's not quite done, but it's done, but it's not done. We're just finishing up the titles and like the artwork, right? But from test screenings, it's off the charts...in awesomeness. It's pretty awesome. It's severely awesome. There's some serious awesomeness going on. What do you think there, Adam?

**PRINCE ADAM:** It's tested great with all the target demos. All of them are pushing the "awesome" button.

**MCBC:** We have, like, a pad, and there's four things, like: "sucktastic," "pretty good," "semi-sweet," and, uh...and "seriously awesome." It's getting all the buttons pushed at once. [Stuff proceeds to fall loudly in the background; we all laugh]

**SKRATCH:** You recently released two songs online, "Mechanical Ape" and "Yo, Check Out My Ride", and you're working on a new album. How is that coming along?

**PRINCE ADAM:** The train's coming out of the station, the tracks are being laid. It'll be out pretty soon. We're really trying hard. [Laughs] We're downshifting into first so we can get up the hill, and then we're gonna go ahead and put it in neutral and just go all the way down with the accumulated songs.

**MCBC:** It's kind of like in a diamond mine: you find so many uncut diamonds, you got to sort through and pick out which ones are going to

be the easiest and most valuable. That's kind of where we're at right now—in the diamond mines...of songs.

**SKRATCH:** What's been your inspiration for writing the new songs?

**PRINCE ADAM:** Um, gold-panning...

**MCBC:** Turtleneck sweaters. Uh, I dunno, ya know? Raw goods! The heatwave right now, the tangy heatwave.

**PRINCE ADAM:** The European heatwave!

**MCBC:** You know, really, it's just whatever, whatever is great. Shag carpet, hammer pants...

**SKRATCH:** Describe the band as if it were a car.

**MCBC:** Sweet, tight, wicked...It's kind of like a lowered covered wagon. It's got some sweet rims.

**PRINCE ADAM:** It's got the dubs.

**MCBC:** And then, like, the pony is all tricked out. There's like a phat airbrush on the side of the covered wagon. There's, like, an Aztec guy sacrificing a hot chick...on the side of the covered wagon. It's, like, as hot rod as you can get—but like 300 years ago. We just like to take the past and future and combine them

**"THAT'S KIND OF  
WHERE WE'RE AT RIGHT NOW—  
IN THE DIAMOND MINES...OF SONGS."**

together. It's like liquid hot gold. Is that a good car description?

**PRINCE ADAM:** Yeah, either that or a 1989 Nissan Sentra.

**MCBC:** Oh yeah—or a '91 Celica...hatchback.

**SKRATCH:** Do you have any plans for touring outside of the United States anytime in the future?

**MCBC:** Oh, there are plans.

**PRINCE ADAM:** Funny you should ask....

**MCBC:** Plans within plans.

**PRINCE ADAM:** There are plans which are currently being drawn up on, you know, archi-



fect paper. We just got a blue pen yesterday, and we drew a map of the world first, and then drew little pictures of covered wagons. And then little dotted lines that connect dots....

MCBC: Yeah. We had to get the pins that stick so we can stick the covered wagons into the correct places we're gonna attack; and kind of like a stick with a hook on the end so that we can push the covered wagons. It's kind of like a war room kind of thing. No, we want to go out of the country, but we just always run into problems for some reason. So that's why we're making plans.

PRINCE ADAM: In support of the new album, tours will be had outside of the U.S.

MCBC: Oh, solid! That's a good answer. Correct! "10 points for Gryffindor!" [Laughs]

SKRATCH: With all the mess going on in Sacramento, have you ever thought about running for governor of California?

you know?

MCBC: Yeah, we love all the authenticity about all the surfers and everything about Orange County in that show. That's what we're all about: wearing rash guards at night and helmets when we drive. It's so...just great. It's almost so good that it sucks.

PRINCE ADAM: Yeah. If you were to make that circle diagram...it's a complicated circle of suck and good.

MCBC: Its such a high 10, its almost a 0...negative 20. Okay, I think you get the joke.

SKRATCH: Besides The Aquabats, do you guys have any other musical side-projects going on?

M C B C :  
U m m . . . [Long  
pause; in deep  
thought] nope, not at  
all!

PRINCE ADAM: And then I walked around the corner, and on the rug was the real one. He was struggling for the door, and you could see the determined look in his eyes. That was the last pet I had.

MCBC: That's strong, Adam.

SKRATCH: Is there a question you would like to ask me?

MCBC: Sure. How's the family?

SKRATCH: The family's doing good



**"THAT'S WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT: WEARING RASH GUARDS AT NIGHT AND HELMETS WHEN WE DRIVE. IT'S SO...JUST GREAT."**

MCBC: That's interesting that that got brought up, because we were actually approached by someone that was going to front us the money to run for governor. But then we were like...no. It's kind of like a little bit too gnarly. And then the next day it was like everyone and their dads were running for governor. It kind of would be funny for a second, but no one would vote for us—especially with such a strong ballot.

PRINCE ADAM: Michael Jackson!

MCBC: Yeah, and Gary Coleman. It goes on and on and on. Whereas we would be running for serious, I think it would kind of come off as a lame publicity stunt. We would be into it, you know? but we would just get lost in the mix.

SKRATCH: Do you have any thoughts on Fox's hot new drama, THE O.C.?

MCBC: Oh, it is raw cinematic television right there. [Group laugh] I think my thoughts are best described by Prince Adam (you know, since we are clairvoyant and can read each other's minds).

PRINCE ADAM: Yeah, there's this one scene where to show us that these guys are surfers, they wear rash guards at night on the beach. I think that's brilliant. One must mark how one is. It's like wearing a helmet when you drive a car,

PRINCE ADAM: At least not The Aquabats.

MCBC: Just The Aquabats 100%. That's all we do all day: live, breathe, sleep, eat [...] just The Aquabats. That's what really makes the wheel turn. That's what gets the gerbils rolling on the wheel. Oh, did I say gerbils? I'm sorry. Let's go back to before "gerbils." [Movie-announcer voice] "In A Land Before Gerbils!" It's a new Disney movie!

SKRATCH: Now for something completely different: Do you guys have any pets?

PRINCE ADAM: I used to have a little frog. It actually got away a little bit ago. It actually lived underwater all the time, then all of a sudden he started breathing air—and then he was gone. He actually planned it for a long time; he planned his escape and went for it.

MCBC: He took little pieces of rocks and feces and made a little version of himself sleeping in the castle. And then one day you went there and looked, and you went, "Oh, there he is, sleeping in the castle." So you tap on it a little bit, and the fake one floated up...an effigy of the frog.

MCBC: Right on. Have you been to the park lately?

SKRATCH: Nope, don't really go to the park much these days.

MCBC: Yeah, with all the drive-bys, it's getting gnarly to go to the park. There's a lot of violence in the park—and not enough picnics.

SKRATCH: Well, are there any final thoughts you would like to leave with the kids out there?

MCBC: Well, it's been a while since The Aquabats have had a new record. It's been a while since we've had anything new come out. That doesn't mean that we've gone away, it just means that we've regrouped and we're ready to attack. We've been in the cave, hiding, but we're ready now. Just a warning to the bands that thought we were gone: You ain't seen nothing yet. It's only just begun. It's taken us 10 years, but...JOIN US!





Strike Anywhere  
By Rich Balling and Charlene Rogers

Ah, the great dichotomy. As long as one group submits, another shall be dominant. Take away the submissive group, and there will be no group in power. Would this take away the desire to be in power? The answer to that is no. There will always be someone craving more apples than the next person. In that thought we are left with a naked struggle to define ourselves, not to compromise the things that are important to us, and to maintain an honest way of life. History is caught in a never-ending cycle that can only be disrupted by those progressive enough to promote overcoming these struggles. Strike Anywhere brings a fresh voice to these age-old struggles. Hailing from Richmond, VA, in 2001 they brought us *CHANGE IS A SOUND* (Jade Tree Records), which is by far one of the most excellent

your closest, most personal moments, when you find yourself accepting responsibility for your actions, as well as accepting your potential. It is a plea for people to NEVER mortgage their creativity. We are saying that there is a way out of this trap, the trap created by the myth that you should spend your life lining someone else's pockets. EXIT ENGLISH says "no" to that myth.

SKRATCH: Do you think people might be jaded about political content in music?

THOMAS: We are part of a fabric. The mohawk-wearing, drunken punks and us are from the same place. Our ideas don't exist in a vacuum. It's really important for us to stay grounded and talk about our experiences in Richmond. Celebrating apathy and aggression and getting it out in the open so people aren't harboring those feelings [in their] everyday life is pretty punk rock. There is a place for all of it. We sing songs that address social issues, etc., but we hate politics. We won't just read

to our science, that makes us human.

SKRATCH: What do you hope to accomplish as a band?

THOMAS: We are kind of making it up as we go along. This is the time to be an independent band. Too many factors now are taking away from the honesty of the music. Everything is packaged to be consumed, and the marketing of music promotes a limited shelf-life that renders that music meaningless. We are suburban kids with a lot of isolation under our belts, and we fall prey to the superficial values that our culture has imposed on us through marketing. As divided and isolated as we are, we have common interests that unite us together. We are a community of music and wish to keep an undercurrent of honest dialogue through our music as we perform at youth centers and rock clubs. This is our unique stamp: to make music more of a culture than a marketing gimmick.

SKRATCH: How important is having good chemistry between band members?

THOMAS: I've lost my voice a couple times in Europe, and I just don't talk. I take ginger root, herbs, teas, and don't drink much on the road (even though I'm sure my bandmates would like to see me a little drunker). I eat pure and unprocessed foods. I feel my vegan diet helps more than hurts. The throat is very porous and takes weeks or more to recover from even the mildest problem.

SKRATCH: Do you read much? What?

THOMAS: I like to read about times past, not through scholars but through the autobiographies of people that lived through those times. I really like Emma Goldman's *LIVING MY LIFE* and other books about the 1900-1930 progressive era, in which people spent the time figuring out the roots of struggle. Right now I'm reading *CATCH A FIRE*, a biography of Bob Marley, which is very interesting; and Herman Hesse's *MAGISTER LUDI*, about a utopia that goes wrong. One of my all-time favorite books would be *WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING*. It is basically a conversation

# STRIKE ANYWHERE

albums released that year (if not in the last five years). Back again with a new album, *EXIT ENGLISH*, they continue their fight for honest music and an honest living.

In the following interview, vocalist Thomas Barnett expounds on the band's politics, music, and the new album.

SKRATCH: Explain the concept behind "EXIT ENGLISH", the title you chose for the new album.

THOMAS: The words are patterned as a modern-day "Leaving Babylon", which was a song by Bad Brains. The concept lies in the three-fold psychological approach to the fears that bind one to society. It reflects

a book and spit out some stuff that Chomsky wrote (although there are bands that do that good). This is a record-to-record mission. We write about the economic situation in our own community first, and then look at how it reflects the rest of the world. We want to reach out and let people know we have a lot of the same aims as they do. There is a place for it.

SKRATCH: Why are lyrics important?

THOMAS: The human voice is the instrument that reaches the mind the fastest. Even if you are listening for the melody or beat, the words will be embedded into your cells. This is why I write lyrics. We know that we live and die. We have invented time. We have language—and according

Important. Some bands describe themselves as a band of brothers. We are more like a nuclear family. Two of us are a little older. In a band, there needs to be different songwriting teams. Two central songwriters are definitely not enough. We all play guitar, so a lot of the melodies are farmed out to various members of our band, including Erik, our drummer. We are as collaborative as it gets. Everything you need in a good relationship we need here times five. Our PR company, Hopper PR, even has the same vision and roots as us. They [are] like our extended family—aunts, uncles, etc. They are also our good friends.

SKRATCH: How do you maintain your voice on tour with such harsh, versatile vocal lines?

THOMAS: between two radical educators and was written by Myles Horton (one of the people that educated Martin Luther King, Jr.) from the Highlander Folk School.

SKRATCH: Three CDs for a desert island?

THOMAS: Crass' *THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000*, Four Walls Falling's *CULTURE SHOCK*, and any one of the first four Bad Brains records.

I highly recommend the new album, *EXIT ENGLISH*; and I consider their previous effort, *CHANGE IS A SOUND*, to be essential. Join the street team or just say hi to the band at their Website, [www.strikeanywhere.org](http://www.strikeanywhere.org), and catch them on tour this fall with The Bouncing Souls and Tsunami Bomb!





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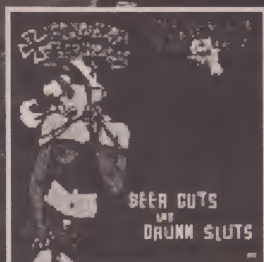
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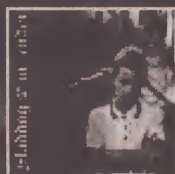
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Teen Idols  
Interview by Dane Jackson

Formerly of Michigan punk outfit Pt's Revenge, Kevin joined Teen Idols roughly two years ago. NOTHING TO PROVE marks his debut as the band's singer. The album is a slight departure from what the band is used to doing...but that's one of the reasons why it's so appealing. The nucleus of the music is there, but Kevin adds a fresh voice and direction for the band. Unfortunately, Teen Idols decided to break up in August—despite having a new release, a new label, and a fresh start. Below is my interview with Kevin.

**SKRATCH:** Well, are the rumors are true: you guys are no longer?

**KEVIN:** Yeah. We fucking...yeah. Pretty much. We ended up breaking up in California a couple of days ago.

**SKRATCH:** What's the story behind that?

**KEVIN:** We're still talking and trying to figure out what the fuck happened, but initially, Phillip just didn't want to play music anymore. And we got in a big fight. Everybody was drunk, and it sucked. Basically, at the end of the night, he said, "You guys can take my shit back and sell it when you get back to Nashville." He was just done playing.

**SKRATCH:** So, when you find a new guitarist, are you going to be Teen Idols still, or will you choose another name and go another way?

**KEVIN:** We can't really do Teen Idols anymore. Phillip, he said we could talk to somebody, but he's the only original member. He started the band 11 years ago, and he pretty much writes all the songs, so it just didn't seem right to try and find somebody else to keep it going. I think Matt, Heather, and I are going to try and stick together once we've paid off some heavy debts we've accumulated. We're going to try to work those down a little bit, and then put something else together.

**SKRATCH:** Musically, do you think your new band will be like Teen Idols?

**KEVIN:** I don't really know. It's hard to tell until we actually get together and start writing the songs. I think everyone agreed that we're going to try to do something melodic still, but maybe with a little bit more of an edge. But then again, who knows? We'll see what happens when the songs start coming out.

**SKRATCH:** So, are you comfortable answering Teen Idols questions?

**KEVIN:** Yeah, that's fine.

**SKRATCH:** Was it weird to go from a Michigan band to a national band?

**KEVIN:** Yes! It was really weird. It was really cool. It was fucking awesome. It wasn't that difficult adjusting because Pt's was around long enough just playing shows in Detroit that we made enough friends—like Julie Martin and Deanna Park—so we got hooked up with openings for big shows. It wasn't like a complete shock playing in front of that many people; but in terms of touring and stuff, that was awesome. It was really cool. I had never been west past Missouri in my life, and now I get to go all over the world.

**SKRATCH:** How was that first show? Were you nervous?

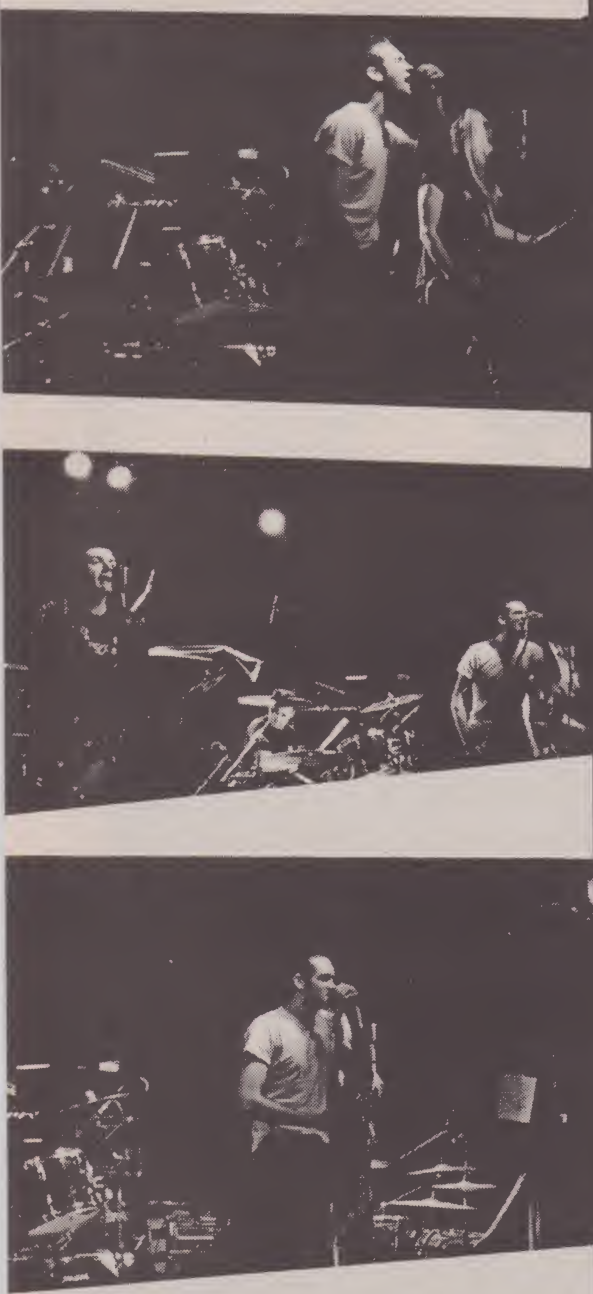
**KEVIN:** Yeah, I was really nervous because I only had two weeks to learn the set before we went on tour. I had just met them. We hit it off really well; we all got along really well. [During] the last practice we did I was still reading lyrics off a sheet of paper, so I was kind of nervous I was going to forget the words and everything. But it turned out alright. Everyone just kind of got in the groove. It was cool.

**SKRATCH:** With the new album, how was the recording process for you? Was it natural?

**KEVIN:** Yeah, it was really easy, because I'd recorded with Mass before with Pt's. [...] It was really easy. I love working with Mass in the studio. Phillip did all the engineering because he worked there, and that helped cut a lot of the costs down. Pretty much it was working with my band and Mass, and it was really fucking awesome. I was real comfortable; I wasn't nervous about it all.

**SKRATCH:** How do you compare the sound on NOTHING TO PROVE to all the things Keith and the band did?

**KEVIN:** In terms of the songs themselves, I know for a fact that the harmonies that Heather and Phillip were writing (and Mass helped out with) were some hard fucking harmonies. They took a lot more thought than some of the other records. When we were doing the main vocal line, I have a different range than Keith does, and I'd be singing the part that Phillip would usually sing as back-up vocals. Instead of doing what was comfortable for him, he had to figure out a different harmony. That's really fucking awkward. We actually did some solo vocals and listened to them. There were some pretty goofy ones that we just laughed about. It all turned out pretty cool. I think the



# TEEN IDOLS



songs are put together really well. It's a lot poppier than some of the other records, but I still think there are some solid songs on there. I'm really, really happy with how it turned out.

bunch of new shit that you don't even know. We kind of toned it down. We played five new songs out of a 22-song set list, so I don't think it was that unbearable. Everybody seemed to like the new songs. People were paying attention. We could already tell [...] that some kids had bought

**SKRATCH:** Since you won't be able to tour to support the album, why should people buy this album?

**KEVIN:** If they like the band, buy it, you know? If they went to the shows and liked the new songs, buy the record; if they went to the shows and didn't like the new songs,

**I was really nervous because I only had two weeks to learn the set before we went on tour. I had just met them."**

**SKRATCH:** What's your favorite thing about it?

KEVIN: That I'm on it. [Laughs] It's the first full-length with me on it. That was one of the things I was really fired up about. I've never been on a full-length record before and [be] able to tour to support it. That only happened for three weeks, ya know? That kinda sucks—but at least I got to do it. That was a cool first for me.

**SKRATCH:** How was the fans' reaction to the new music live?

KEVIN: Really good. I always hate that kind of shit when you go to a show and you want to hear all the old songs from the band that you're going to see, and they have a new record out and they're playing a whole

the record already and they were singing along with the new songs. That felt pretty good. That was cool.

**SKRATCH:** Is it kind of weird having to hang up the leather jacket?

KEVIN: I guess. I was pretty fucking pissed off, so I threw it in a dumpster. Then John grabbed it out because one of the guys from Madcap wanted it—so he has it now.

**SKRATCH:** How do you see the album now that you're no longer in the band? Are you proud of it?

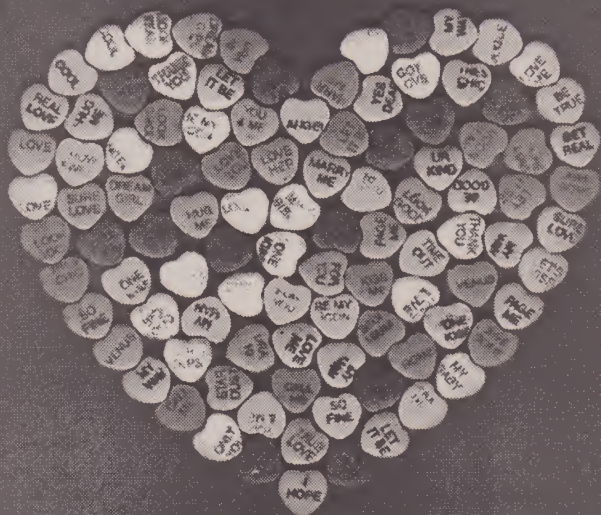
KEVIN: Yeah, I'm very proud. I'm always going to be proud of it. It was really cool. It was a different way of writing songs than I've ever been a part of before. [...] It was just really cool the way it came together. When we got into the studio, we only had a few songs written. Just scraping it all together and finally getting it in your hands after months and months is really fucking cool.

then don't buy the record. If people like this kind of music, they should buy it. That's it.

**SKRATCH:** Do you have any last words?

KEVIN: I don't know, other than we're all sorry. If people are pissed, that sucks. I hope they can understand what's going on. If they can't and they're pissed, then, you know, fuck off. It's not your life, it's our life. That's about it, I guess.

The one thing that is important to realize here is that bands break up and shit happens—but the music will always be there. With that in mind, Teen Idols will never be forgotten. Make sure you get a chance to buy their last release. It's a great punk-rock record in an era of generic indie/emo pop music. Unfortunately, the band's Website has been taken off the Web, so if you'd like further information on Teen Idols, check out <http://www.fueledbyramen.com>.



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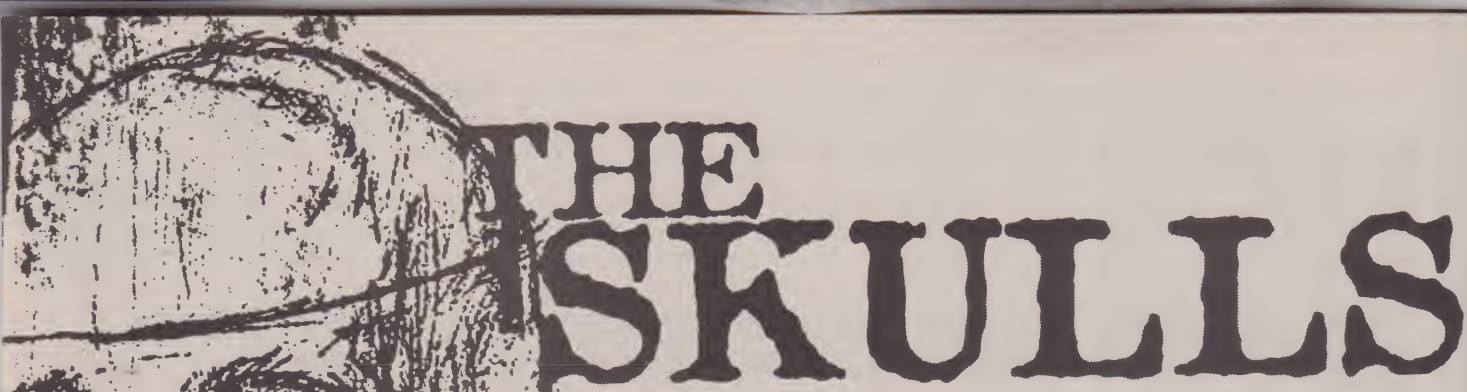
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# THE SKULLS

THE SKULLS  
Interview by Marcia Taylor

The Skulls originally formed in 1977 (with Billy Bones, Marc Moreland, and Mike Wallace) when the Masque, one of L.A.'s first punk clubs, opened. The group played numerous shows there, but eventually disbanded, losing Moreland to Wall of Voodoo. Vocalist Bones resurrected The Skulls a couple of years ago with Kevin Preston on guitar, James (a.k.a. Hardslug) on bass, and Sean on drums. The group released a full-length, *THERAPY FOR THE SHY*, in late 2002; and is set to release a second full-length in early September 2003.

I spoke to The Skulls at a recent Showcase Theatre gig (sponsored by Team Goon, who has added a The Skulls skateboard to its line of old-school punk-band decks).

**SKRATCH:** Billy, why did The Skulls stop playing, and what made you want to get involved in the music scene again?

**BILLY:** I gave it a rest for a while. I have a daughter, and I wanted to her to have a good education and life. And I was

disillusioned with the people in the business. Then I ran into James at the Egyptian Theatre at a British mod show. I knew him through a mutual friend. Kevin Preston had a band that was playing at the show, and he wanted to cover one of my songs. I told him, "Do 'em all—they're just sitting." Anyway, he wanted to do one that night, and he asked me to come on stage and sing it with him—and that went well. And then I went to a Controllers and Dogs show, and Brendan was spinning. Sean was there, and he asked if we could do "Victim". So we got up and did it, and the audience reaction was just so positive. So that's what got the wheels turning.

**JAMES:** I want to say that it wasn't just like four guys getting together to be in a band; it's four families—including wives and kids. We have a whole new social group. It's amazing.

**SKRATCH:** How do you guys feel about so many of the old-school punk bands getting back together? Do you think it makes it more competitive, or do you feel like the more, the merrier?

**BILLY:** If they're having the same feeling for what they're doing that I am, more power to 'em.

**JAMES:** If people have any negative feelings about older bands that reunite, I think [it comes] from people talking with a certain scorn about some bands who are just "doing it for the money." Well, you have to remember that, for many of these guys, that's all they've ever done; they don't know how to do anything else. Maybe the new stuff isn't as good as the old, but if their intentions are honorable and they're doing the best job they can, then it's okay. And if you don't like it, then don't go see it.

**SEAN:** There are a lot of kids who are getting to see bands for the first time, which is good for them. 10 years have gone, and history is repeating itself. I think it's really cool. Hopefully we're inspiring kids to form their own bands and make their own music history.

**JAMES:** Music is cyclical. All genres come around again. Why not punk?

**KEVIN:** It's amazing to be my age and not have to say, "I wish I was around back then." We have all the cool, new technology, but we can also see those bands.

**SKRATCH:** What are some of The Skulls' musical influences?

**BILLY:** I started to listen to The Animals first, then the Stones. They were bad boys, definitely punk. I also liked the Mersey beat stuff, T-Rex, Roxy Music, and The Stooges.

**SKRATCH:** Did you play any instruments or sing in the school chorus?

**BILLY:** No. I used to bang on the stuff in my bedroom. And I'd stand in front of the mirror and pretend to be James Brown or Mick Jagger.

**SKRATCH:** Two very good role models for a frontman, I'd say. Kevin, I'd forgotten—until I saw you play tonight—how much fun it is to watch you on stage. You're such a showman, playing with your mouth, doing all that crazy stuff. And maybe it's the sideburns, but you just have that "70s 'guitar god'" thing going on. Who are your influences?

**KEVIN:** As far as the guitar goes, I grew up listening to Prince, The Go-Go's, and The B-52's. The Go-Go's, being female, had that dancey-go-lucky thing going. The B-52's were totally flamboyant. I take from everywhere. The New York Dolls were incredible.

**SKRATCH:** Well, you're definitely taller AND better-looking than Johnny Thunders. James, what are some of your influences?

**JAMES:** Sweet, T-Rex, all that kinda stuff—the glitter-pop throwaway kind of thing. Slade....

**SKRATCH:** You have a new record coming out in September. It seems like you just released your first record since re-forming very recently. Can you tell me about that?

**JAMES:** We only just released our first in November. But we've found ourselves to be prolific songwriters—tunesmiths AND wordsmiths. Every week when we rehearse, someone brings something. While recording—and before we'd even released the last record—we already had three or four songs finished. So we started recording again straight-away. We thought, "We'll keep the pressure on." We have a following up in Seattle, so we went up there and recorded eight more songs. Before we knew it, we had another 14 songs in the can—all original. So in September, the new album, called *THE GOLDEN AGE OF PIRACY*, comes out.

**SKRATCH:** It seems like pirates are a popular theme right now—the new Disney movie and all.

**JAMES:** Forget the Disney movie. Piracy is a big theme because of the issue of the kids downloading music from the Internet—musical piracy. There's a reason that kids are doing it. If a band makes a CD and sells it at a price that is reasonable and puts all good songs on it, then that's good. But now kids go and pay for a CD, and they get it home, and there are two hits on it; the rest is fluff. Our CD has 14 rip-roaring, ass-burning songs. We challenge people to buy it!

**SKRATCH:** How about you, Billy?

**BILLY:** I think it's awesome. We had a blast making it, and it shows in the music. It's all about having fun. And we all contributed, as far as writing. That's why I think it's so strong. From the feedback we've gotten, everyone seems to like it.

**SKRATCH:** Are there any songs on the new disc that you'd like to tell me about?

**BILLY:** "Black Day", which is about kids that don't get a lot of support from their family—kind of like the Columbine thing. And "Jerry #5". That's about Mark Moreland, who was the original Skulls guitar player. He went on to Wall of Voodoo. He wrote "Mexican Radio" and did the best version of "Ring of Fire" ever. He passed away last year, and it's a tribute to him. I also really like the "Aye, Aye, Aye" song that the kid [i.e., Kevin] wrote.

**SKRATCH:** Kevin and Sean, how do you feel about the new record?

**KEVIN:** I think the most unique thing about the band is that there's no dictator. We all contributed [...] equally. Each of us wrote some lyrics and music.

**SEAN:** It's a good record. We all contributed—like on the first record. We're all writing a little bit more [now].

**SKRATCH:** You guys are on the Dr. Strange label. How did that come about? Are you happy with it?

**SEAN:** He saw us perform at the Class of '77 show. We had a deal with someone else for our older material. But he took us out to dinner, laid it all out for us, and made us feel very comfortable. It definitely was the full-out approach, not just a quick handshake. We're very happy.

**SKRATCH:** I listened to the three songs on the promo that you gave me, and they're really good! I'm really looking forward to hearing the whole thing. Thanks for taking the time to talk. Now I've got to get back inside to hear Shattered Faith.

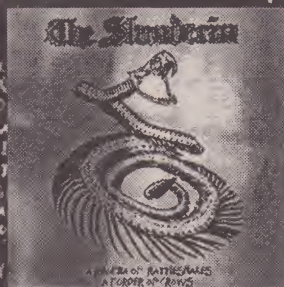




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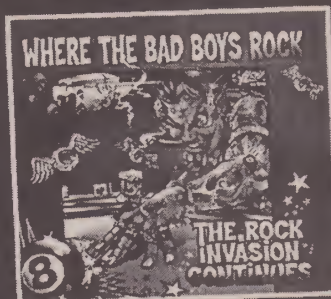
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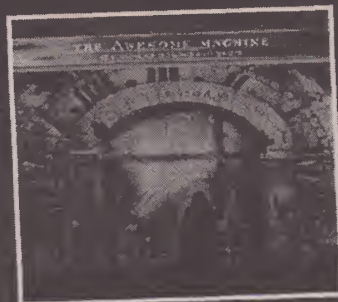
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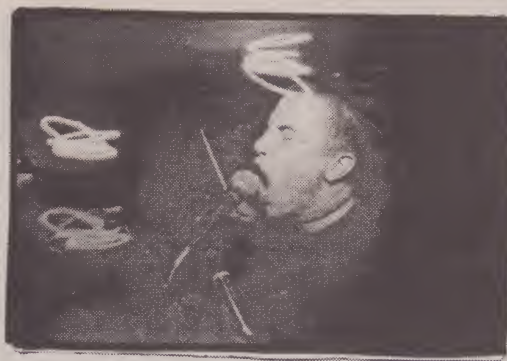
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# BELOVED <sup>(43)</sup>

## BELOVED

Interview by Tiffany Chow

As much as it is growing, the hardcore scene is starting to become stale and predictable. Luckily for the kids and for the music as a whole, bands like Beloved exist. Like a cool breeze, these young North Carolinians bring a unique sound and a unique message. With an incredible new album and sold-out shows with their close friends and labelmates Norma Jean, Beloved's success has only just begun.

**SKRATCH:** Go ahead and state your name, your age, and what you do in Beloved.

**JOSH:** Josh, I'm 19, I play guitar and sing.

**DUSTY:** I'm Dusty, I'm 21, I play guitar.

**MATT:** I'm Matt, I'm 21, and I play guitar.

**JOE:** Joe, 21, drums/vox.

**SKRATCH:** You guys just released a new album (your first from Solid State) entitled **FAILURE ON**. How did your signing to Solid State come about?

**DUSTY:** We were going to sign with Takehold Records. We wanted to be on Solid State. We were Solid State kids listening to Zao records and MxPx records. We really wanted to be on Solid State. They came and watched us at first like three years ago, and we weren't that good, and they were like, "Give these guys a year or so." They didn't want to sign us, [but] they were just trying to be nice to us. Then Chad started taking interest in us, and as the talks progressed, he was like, "Yeah, I don't want to sign you to Takehold, 'cause something big is about to happen." Then, he ended up going over to Tooth and Nail, and Tooth and Nail bought out Takehold. It kind of took two birds with one stone.

**JOSH:** So we signed with Solid State in May of 2001.

**SKRATCH:** How have you been enjoying the new record label? What are some advantages, perks, or benefits that you have already experienced that come from being on the label?

**DUSTY:** It's a really good family-type feel to it. Not to be cheesy or anything, but, like, you know everybody on staff since there are only 20 people on staff, but it's not like you've got, like, small-time money or anything. They've got a lot of money—it's really good for an indie label. It's good to have that much financial freedom.

**JOSH:** They flew us to Vancouver to record our CD. We'd never been there. We bought our van with the money they gave us. They're really behind us. Even though we're just kids and stuff, they're really behind us.

**SKRATCH:** The new album is a blatant example of how much Beloved tends to do their own thing and stray from the norm. With a very seamless fusion of metal, hardcore, and melody, you've managed to create a very unique sound. It seems that nowadays the hardcore scene has become very close-minded and suspicious of anything that's different. Despite this, your album and touring have been well-received. How does this feel? Did you ever worry that your individuality wouldn't receive a positive response?

**JOSH:** I guess we're kind of unique because we have three guitars; and even though we're a hardcore band, we don't have a frontman—like a big tough guy. But to us, that never really seemed weird. Like, when I look at us on video, it doesn't seem weird to me—but it probably seems weird to kids who've never seen us. I think it's been received well. [...] I was more worried about people thinking that we were trying to jump on some bandwagon or that we were trying to do something that is popular right now, with bands like Thrice and Thursday [being] really big, that kind of style. [...]

**SKRATCH:** The album is impressive, so it is no wonder that so many people have taken to it. It explores pretty thoroughly the idea of failure, pressing on despite failing, and perseverance. Would you agree? If so, what inspired this topic?

**JOSH:** I don't know. I guess it's good that people can see that. [...] I think all of our lyrics have hope in them—even if we're concentrating on something like loss or grief or regret. There's still a

message of hope in that, even though we might not have tried to do that. I guess we were just writing what we were feeling at the time, because if you look at the songs, a lot of them are about different stuff; but it kind of comes together under one idea—the title.

**SKRATCH:** That idea of getting up after falling down and moving on is somewhat rare in today's society. With not only the uniqueness of your music but also the uniqueness of your attitude, the band has definitely set itself apart in the scene. It seems that you could easily become role models for many of the kids. Do you think you already have. If so, how? If not, why not?

**JOSH:** I know that even now we still look up to bands. [...] We're not trying to be [...] role models, I think just naturally kids are going to look up to you. There are still bands that I look up to. I think it's more of a good thing [than a bad thing] because it holds you accountable and keeps you on your toes.

**MATT:** It helps you stay positive about things.

**SKRATCH:** Tonight you are playing to a sold out crowd at the Showcase Theatre in Corona, CA, with the likes of Norma Jean, who are huge stalwarts in the hardcore scene. How does it feel to be playing with them and to share a label with them?

**DUSTY:** Dude, it's awesome. The last time we played here ([which was] our first time on the West Coast) was with Norma Jean. They're like our best friends. We've known them for like three years. [...] Last time we played California, every show was like 500 kids. It was huge! Coming back here, there are super high expectations.

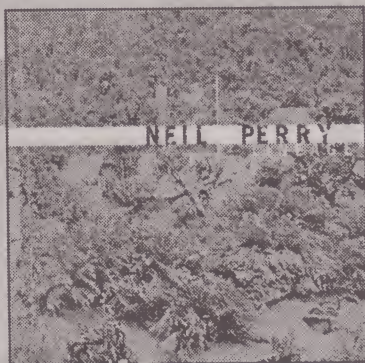
**JOSH:** It's good not to have to worry if kids are going to come to the show. If we did a tour by ourselves, we'd pull up somewhere and there could either be 10 kids here tonight or 200. So at least on this [tour], you don't have to worry.

**SKRATCH:** With a new album out, you have a whole slew of new material to play. Even before this album and the touring with larger acts, you had gained a pretty solid fan base with your EP featuring such musical gems as



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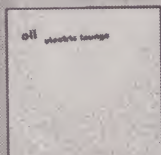
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"Kiss It Goodbye" and "The Blue Period". Will you be playing any of it anymore?

MATT: We still play one song off of the EP that we all agree that we still like. There's really only a [small] possibility of us ever playing two off of there just because Johnny (our bass player) doesn't know the last three songs, because he replaced our other guy.

DUSTY: He came on a month or two months before we went to write our new CD, so he was just learning the new songs. We didn't really have

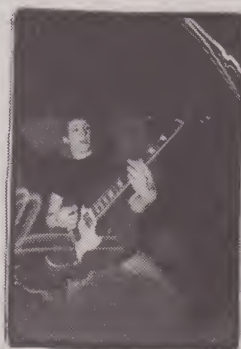
time to teach him the old stuff. We had so much fun teaching him the new stuff, anyways, because that's what we all liked a lot better. I mean, we played that stuff off the EP for like two years—and it's only like five songs.

MATT: We're just really excited now because kids are actually learning our words. Now it's actually fun to play.

SKRATCH: When Beloved was first starting, what were your goals as a band? Did you guys share a focus or goal that you hoped to reach as a group? If so, what was it?

DUSTY: We just wanted to have fun.

JOE: I just wanted to be in a band that actually had substance to it, [with] lyrics that had substance as a whole. [And] more than being a band



**"WE WANT TO REPRESENT MORE THAN JUST OUR MUSIC."**

with just good, positive lyrics, we wanted to be cool to everybody and show people true love, just love for people. That's what's important. Even though the hardcore scene is all about being tough and punching kids in the face in the pit, it's so much better to be positive about everything and just try to be cool to people. That's what we wanted to do.

JOSH: Just as a band, overall, more than our lyrics, in our actions and as people. We want to represent more than just our music.

Catch Beloved's amazing live show on the Solid State Tour with Norma Jean, The Agony Scene, and Figure Four. If you haven't already, make sure to pick up a copy of the new album, FAILURE ON, out now on Solid State Records. [www.belovedrock.com](http://www.belovedrock.com) [www.solidstaterecords.com](http://www.solidstaterecords.com)



# FAIRWEATHER

Fairweather

Interview by Dane Jackson

With LUSITANIA, Virginia's Fairweather has released a very diverse and challenging album. Not only will it raise the standards for good indie rock, but it will become an important addition to your album collection. Combining heartfelt lyrics with hardcore-laced, passionate indie rock, Jay Middleton and the boys of Fairweather are here to stay.

Below is my interview with Jay.

**SKRATCH:** You've had three releases on Equal Vision Records so far. How do you think they've treated you?

JAY: I don't know about other labels, but I know that we've been very happy with the way they've dealt with us. They've always been part of the team. We're just good friends with them.

**SKRATCH:** Do you think friendship is an important part of being part of a label, then?

JAY: I definitely think so. I think that you don't want to let down your friends. Everyone's working together. It's important. I don't believe in "strictly business." It's kind of boring that way.

**SKRATCH:** Do you think it puts some pressure on you because if you're friends, you don't want to put out something bad?

JAY: Sure. In general, though, you don't want to put out anything bad. You want to be doing what's challenging you and what you're interested in. Hopefully, that translates to what people like. That's the best you can do.

**SKRATCH:** Speaking of challenging yourself, did you accomplish what you tried to accomplish with your new album?

JAY: I think in some ways yes, and in some ways no. I think that a lot of it was just writing stuff. Like, we really wanted to write [in] certain ways [after the style of] other artists. I think this record was pretty much one of those records that proved to us that we can do anything we wanted—so we feel that with the next record we're going to be able to do something really great. But we're really happy with this one.

**SKRATCH:** What do you think is the overall mood or theme of the new album?

JAY: I really couldn't say. I'm not sure if I'm objective enough to tell, you know what I mean? It's just kind of abstract to me. Each song is kind of individual to me. I know the record has a feeling, but I just can't identify it.

**SKRATCH:** How have people responded to the album so far?

JAY: It's been really awesome. Our fans have been writing us every day, and it's been really great. We're really excited to be able to play these new songs. I think the new songs are going over better live than our old songs—which I think is not the case usually.

**SKRATCH:** This is more like a mood record, and it's kind of smooth and mellow—so how do the songs translate live?

JAY: I think the mood completely translates live. It's more of creating an atmosphere as opposed to super-charged energy, running around, hoping for pile-ons and finger-points. We are able to play and entertain without having to interact—though we like to [inter



**"...bands aren't agendas:  
they're people who enjoy playing  
music and appreciate people enjoying their music."**

act]. That's a good place to be: where you can be isolated from the crowd and still be good.

**SKRATCH: If you could do one thing over in your life, what would it be?**

JAY: In general, I think I would have approached the band differently. I don't think we knew what we wanted to do, and I don't think we knew what to expect or what it took to be in a band. I think that I would have been a lot more prepared. I may have even waited awhile before my band did anything to give us time to grow up and really learn what kind of music we wanted to make. After the four songs on our demo, the songs on our first record were the next 10 songs that we wrote. We weren't, like, picking and choosing good songs; we were trying to make an album—that was the goal. "Okay, we've got 10 songs. That's cool. Let's go." [With] this next record, we've been a lot more discerning, a lot more calculated. I think that we're just a lot more educated as to what it means to be a good band and to make good music.

**SKRATCH: You've had a lot of line-up changes, right?**

JAY: Yeah, yeah. Hopefully [there will be] no more.

**SKRATCH: So you think this is a stable line-up for good now?**

JAY: I'm pretty sure, I'm pretty confident that it is. We've been a unit for about a year-and-a-half, and everybody has really good [rap-port] with each other, and we get along better than any [previous] line-up [both] on tour or at home. It's good. We just hang out with each other and have fun. We're friends.

**SKRATCH: What do these guys have that past band members didn't?**

JAY: Well, I think a couple more years on them. And I think they have the dedication that it takes, too. They're interested in creating music that they really like. I think that when we started the band, the old line-up was more inclined to [just] have fun, and that's why they were in a band—[it was a] "something to do" sort of thing. It started taking off, and I think that changed their idea of what they wanted to do.

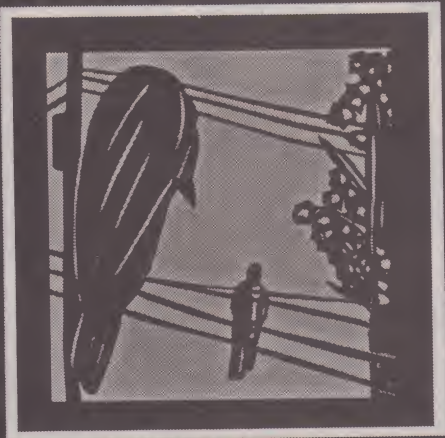
**SKRATCH: When you're on tour, what bands have taught you valuable lessons?**

JAY: I think you usually learn more from the bands that aren't succeeding on stage and their live performance is lacking. It gives me a chance to learn from their follies. I can check out and see what makes them look uncomfortable or what makes them look unprofessional and improve that in myself.

**SKRATCH: Where do you see your band within the next year? within the next five years?**

JAY: I don't know. It's weird, because [right now] everybody seems to be thinking [in terms of] success and failure. You go to a band's show, and there's only like 50 people there. You know that most of the crowd's probably thinking, "Oh, this band's on the way out"; [but] I was going to shows thinking, "Oh man, I can't believe we're so lucky that we get to watch this while everyone else is missing out." I don't know about the future. Record sales, I'm sure, will determine where we are—but what we're doing will be the same.

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**SKRATCH:** Do you feel pressure to be a role model because you're a musician?

**JAY:** You know, a little bit. We were all hardcore kids growing up, and I think in that scene we all looked toward bands that we liked, so I understand that there's that sort of aspect to being in a band. Mainly, I like being a representative of my band not for kids, [but] mainly just to show people how we are.

**SKRATCH:** Does that influence the way you live, then?

**JAY:** A little bit. Generally, I just try to be a good person. I try to stick to my morals and to be reasonable.

**SKRATCH:** You said you were a hardcore kid. What do you think of the Salt Lake City hardcore scene?

**JAY:** You know, I'm not that familiar [with it].

**SKRATCH:** Well, there's a bunch of straight-edge kids that beat everyone up.

**JAY:** I think that's pretty uncool. Hardcore for me was about acceptance. It was anybody's music, and anybody could start a band. I was straight-edge for a while. I guess if you're not now, you never were; but it was a big deal to me. It was important, but it was always a personal thing. So I've never understood the straight-edge gangs. Everybody's here doing the same thing, and there's no reason for that.

**SKRATCH:** Do you think that gives a negative spin to all the other straight-edge kids?

**JAY:** Completely. It definitely gives a bad name to straight-edge kids. For me, I never associated myself [with it] because it was so personal. [...]

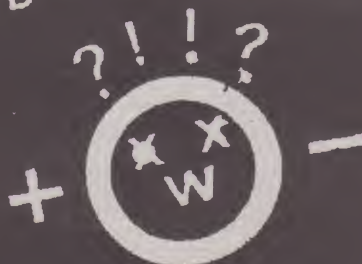
**SKRATCH:** What's the one thing you want people to get out of this interview?

**JAY:** I don't know. [Laughs] God, you've got the hardest questions ever to answer. If they take anything away, I would have them take that bands aren't agendas: they're people who enjoy playing music and appreciate people enjoying their music.

For more information on Fairweather, check out [www.equalvision.com](http://www.equalvision.com).

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# Saosin

**SAOSIN**  
Interview by Rich Bailing and  
Charlene Rogers

You've heard it a million times:  
**THE NEXT BIG THING, or THESE  
GUYS ARE GOING TO BE HUGE!**  
Well, here it is really!  
Melodic hardcore was only  
an idea before the world  
began to hear the songs  
on Saosin's **TRANSLATING  
THE NAME**, an EP  
sure to redefine the  
genre. Get to know  
Saosin now, before  
the storm hits in the  
following interview  
with vocalist  
Anthony Green,  
guitarist Justin  
Shekoski, and  
guitarist/pro-  
ducer Beau  
Burchell.

**SKRATCH:** When and how did the band form?

**BEAU:** Justin and I were trying to get this band started, and we were trying to find people to do it.

**JUSTIN:** All of the good musicians were either taken and in a band or didn't want to do it for some reason. It's been a long process finding everyone for the band. We wanted everything to be perfect before we started playing shows.

**BEAU:** We asked our friend Keith from the band Days Away if he knew any vocalists who sounded really cool. We just wanted a really cool voice. He didn't know anybody, but we had a mutual friend, Befreah, who used to sell pot to Anthony who said, "Dude, I know this guy who has an awesome voice!" And the rest is history.

**SKRATCH:** What do you have to say to all the haters out there who are already spreading rumors about you guys being put together or only forming to get a major-label deal?

**ANTHONY:** It's a great compliment that people even take the time to talk. Let them go! It's good if people are paying attention to us whether it's positive or negative.

**SKRATCH:** Describe your sound to someone who has never heard you before.

**ANTHONY:** We're like a metal Bjork.

**BEAU:** At the time we started the band, we were actually listening to a ton of Bjork and Sunny Day Real Estate, and I remember thinking how cool it would be to start a hardcore Bjork band.

**ANTHONY:** Then I realized I can't compare myself to Bjork she's way too cool. There is just no comparison.

**SKRATCH:** What other bands have you guys been in?

**BEAU:** Justin was in a band called As Hope Dies back when they were called in Reply. That is actually how we met. I was recording As Hope Dies at the time, and I asked them what had happened to the old guitar player they used to have who totally shredded. They gave me his number, and we totally hit it off, and now we are best friends. Anthony was in a band called Zolot the Rock n Roll Destroyer. Alex (our drummer) and I were in Open Hand. Everything that went wrong with the other bands. We want to

make sure won't happen here.

**SKRATCH:** Tell us about your label, Death Do Us Part.

**JUSTIN:** It's actually just us and Drew, our manager. We wanted to put it out ourselves.

**BEAU:** There is ton of music coming out right now that is kind of comparable to us, and I'm sure we probably sound like this band or that band, but we didn't want to get caught up in that whole scene.

**JUSTIN:** Most labels are seeing this style of music as coming up, so they are trying to catch as many bands as they can and we didn't want to be a part of that.

**ANTHONY:** We really love our music, and we want to be involved in every aspect of it.

**JUSTIN:** Right now we are on tour, and we don't have anyone to answer to it's just us.

**SKRATCH:** Is it true you plan to produce all your future releases by yourselves?

**JUSTIN:** We know what we want to sound like best.

**ANTHONY:** We don't want to take our music to somebody and say, "Hey, what can you do with this?" We want to be involved in our music at every level. It's our baby. **YOU DON'T FUCK AROUND WITH BABY!**

**SKRATCH:** One CD each for a desert island.

**BEAU:** I'd make a mix tape of The Bled, The Bronx, and Oasis.

**JUSTIN:** I love the new Third Eye Blind album.

**ANTHONY:** **THRILLER** by Michael Jackson.

**JUSTIN:** People always ask us what our favorite records are, and sometimes we are afraid to say.

**BEAU:** Yeah. I listen to the gayest stuff. I'm telling you, though, now that I think about it, that new Third Eye Blind record is my favorite record right now.

**SKRATCH:** Anthony, what inspires your lyrics?

**ANTHONY:** All of the lyrics I write for this band are inspired by the members of the band. The whole new record, all the songs that I'm writing, are going to be about the tour and the time that I spend living in Beau's garage. They are all about members of the band, the band as a whole, them as my friends, our time together, and the fears that come with it all (with the exception of SEVEN YEARS, which is

the last thing I wrote in my pre-California life).

**SKRATCH:** When will you be taking time out to record a full-length album?

**BEAU:** We have one more tour with Story of the Year, then we plan to come home. While I produce the new full-length CD for Name Taken, the rest of the band will be writing new material. When I am done recording we will all get together and collaborate and get the new songs together.

**ANTHONY:** It's going to be a clusterfuck of ideas. Whatever fluid lands on the floors is going to be scooped up and thrown on a 2". It's going to be golden. I can't wait.

**SKRATCH:** What songs seem to be getting the best crowd reaction on the tour?

**BEAU:** They all are, minus the new song. It's my favorite song, but the crowd doesn't seem to be as into it probably because they don't know it. Our set is only six songs long right now.

**SKRATCH:** We typically dislike asking this question, but we must know. Where does your name come from, and what does it mean?

**ANTHONY:** It is a Chinese proverb that means to love with caution. Fathers used to aid their sons into marriage contracts with women at very young ages. So the proverb is really about a system of emotionless males growing up.

**SKRATCH:** Where do you see yourselves in five years?

**JUSTIN:** I don't know, but I just want to be big enough to where we can wake up, drink Jack Daniels, and snort coke for breakfast.

**ANTHONY:** I would like to get my wake-up call as I'm smoking a crack rock out of the ass of a Haitian prostitute.

**JUSTIN:** Where can you go from that?

For tour dates and information on both the band and how to order their new EP, visit [www.saosin.com](http://www.saosin.com).





# THE HAVOC

THE HAVOC  
By Janelle Jones

The Havoc abide by the ultimate tenet of punk, as not only do they sing about the importance of being an individual and standing by one's principles, they also live it. Despite that, some people in the scene would be put off by the fact that The Havoc's members (vocalist/bassist Jason, vocalist/guitarists Josiah and Justin, and drummer Aaron) are devout Christians. But their own personal beliefs shouldn't be an issue, as they don't preach. Speaking with Jason was an eye-opener, proving that even if one may not agree with a band's beliefs, it doesn't mean he/she can't enjoy their music. Here, Jason elaborates on the band's quest to overcome the Christian stigma, discusses their new record, and explains why there's no room for elitists in punk.

SKRATCH: Everywhere I look, someone always mentions how nice you guys are. Is it a conscious effort, or is it just in your nature?  
JASON: Cool! Well, the way I look at it is there's no room for rock stars in punk rock. If you're going to show up at a show and there are people there coming to see you and you're just going to hang out in your van the whole time and when it's your time to play you get up there and play and then when you're done you just pack up your stuff and go to the hotel and don't even hang out with anybody, to me that's kind of like...that's just ridiculous. It's like, dude, these people are paying to see you and they're excited about it. And for me, I know when I'm on tour, I love hanging out with people, meeting new people and making new friends and stuff like that, you know? So as soon as we get there, we're always hanging out with people, talking to them, talking to the other bands, stuff like that. And then we hang out with them afterwards. We might stay the night at their house or get food with them or whatever. Because I know for me when I was growing up and going to punk shows and stuff, the coolest thing was just going to a show. I grew up in Oklahoma, and there wasn't really much of a scene there. When a big band came through, it was a really big deal. And then, you know, to get to see one of your favorite bands and to actually hang out with

them, too, that just...I don't know—kids just love that stuff. And if it wasn't for those people, we couldn't be a band, 'cause those people are the people that pay to see us, buy our stuff—they support us, you know? They're the people that count. And to me they're the most important people in the scene—not the people that have been around for years and years and years and are too punk rock for somebody. It's all about the people that are keeping it alive, and I believe that it's those people coming to our shows. So we always try and just hang out and just get to know people.

SKRATCH: What do you think is the biggest misconception people have of the band?

JASON: The biggest misconception is that we're a bunch of religious jerks. For the most part everybody knows that we are all Christians, but just because we are, that doesn't mean that we're saying, "Look at us: we're perfect and you're going to hell." And I think people have that perception about us that we're like that—and that's totally NOT how it is. For us, it's like, you know, this is our personal belief, and we're not timid about it—but we're not out to shove it down somebody's throat, either. I don't think it's cool—regardless of what you believe—to shove what you believe down somebody else's throat. Everybody leads their own life and makes their own decisions and has their own beliefs. And I totally think that that's cool. But for some reason people want to give us crap because we believe in God, because we serve God or whatever. To them that's just not cool enough. [But] I don't have to live my life by a punk-rock rule book, you know? Just because you don't think it's punk rock or because it's not cool, that doesn't mean anything to me. This is my life, and I'm going to live it the way I see fit. And I have no problem letting people know what I believe. But like I said, people just think that we're out to preach at them or shove the Bible down their throat or something, and that's totally NOT what we're about. We're actually against all that, because we know that people who do do that are what gives Christianity a bad name. [...]

SKRATCH: Yeah, it's not like you're shoving it down people's throats. What you believe shouldn't even matter, because good music is good music no matter what.

JASON: [...] That's kind of my point. That's kind of Dave from Punk Core—you know, that's what his point was, too. He told me a lot of people would give them crap or whatever, and he was



like, "You know what? Punk Core Records signs good punk bands that make good punk music—and I believe The Havoc meets that criteria." So that's good enough for them, it's good enough for me. We're a punk band just like all punk bands. We write about songs that deal with life and society, government, religion—you know, everything that has to do with modern-day life. We write about the same things that other punk bands do. And the way I look at it is: every punk band can write about their personal beliefs, and that's cool—but as soon as we do it, people are like, "Oh, get that out of here." [...] That's kind of narrow-minded. Everybody's supposed to stand up for what they believe. To me, punk is about being who you are and not really caring what anybody else thinks about it and not changing, just standing up for what you believe. [...]

**SKRATCH:** That kind of touches on what I was going to ask you next. You cover every topic on this record—society, religion, politics (of course), and being an individual and not caring what other people think. And that's just what all great streetpunk bands sing about—the problems with society and what affects us. What would you say to people who feel that streetpunk isn't relevant anymore, that you're all just singing about the same things that have been done before?

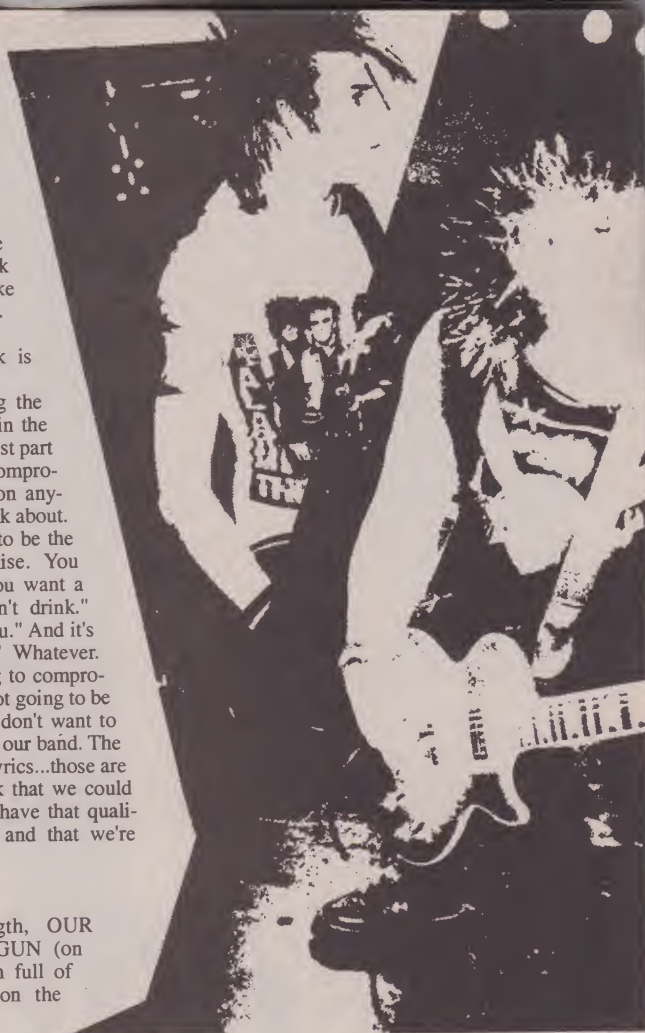
**JASON:** To me it's not dead at all. It might be at a turning point. I think that there's definitely a transition now between '90s streetpunk and modern-day streetpunk. As times change, so do bands, so do styles—and that goes with music and fashion. And for me it's definitely not dead. [...] I think that it's kind of reaching its peak. Right now [I think] punk in general is the biggest it's ever been 'cause it's alive in several different countries—and it's alive in a very big way. It's breaking out to the point where it's in record stores all over the place, it's in Hot Topic, it's all over the Internet. Once something has gotten to that point, I don't really think it's dead—I think it's growing. To me, that's kind of obvious. A lot of streetpunk bands are making their way into Hot Topic

and stuff like that, and that's just going to open up the doors for more kids that are younger to get into punk rock. People act like it's not cool for stuff to be in Hot Topic, it's not cool for CDs to be in Virgin Records or wherever; [but] I'm all about seeing the punk scene grow. If you want to see the punk scene grow, then you have to make it available to people everywhere.

**SKRATCH:** What do you think is The Havoc's greatest asset?

**JASON:** The best asset is being the most extreme death-metal band in the world. Just kidding! I think the best part about our band is that we don't compromise. We offer truth to people on anything, anything people want to talk about. We offer them what we believe to be the truth, and we don't compromise. You know, somebody says, "Hey, you want a beer?" We're like, "No we don't drink." "Oh, come on, one won't hurt you." And it's like, "No, dude, I don't drink." Whatever. Stuff like that. We're not willing to compromise on who we are, and we're not going to be forced to do something that we don't want to do. [...] I think that's what makes our band. The music and all that is great. Our lyrics...those are all great; but I really don't think that we could function as a band if we didn't have that quality—that we don't compromise and that we're here to do what we do.

The Havoc's debut full-length, **OUR REBELLION HAS JUST BEGUN** (on Punk Core), is a defiant album full of raging streetpunk. For more on the band, check out .



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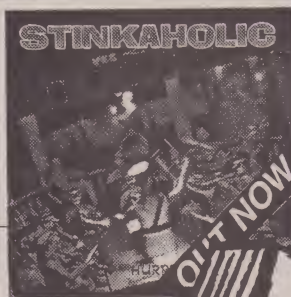
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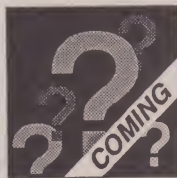
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# Joseph Hill of CULTURE

Joseph Hill of Culture  
Interview by Dug

When people think of the foundation of reggae music, they usually think of artists like Bob Marley, Dennis Brown, Burning Spear, and Culture. When Culture released its debut album, *TWO SEVENS CLASH*, in 1977, it rocked the world and became the first Jamaican reggae band regularly scheduled alongside England's burgeoning punk bands. The lead singer of Culture, Joseph Hill, is now one of the elder statesmen of the reggae world, burning with the fire of a prophet and captivating audiences wherever he goes. With the release of Culture's newest album, *WORLD PEACE*, the band has launched a world tour.

We caught up with Hill in his hotel room before his headlining performance at Long Beach's Caribbean Seabreeze Festival

(sponsored by Reggae Nucleus).

**SKRATCH:** I've heard a lot of talk that you were going to retire, but now you're back with a great album. What's the real story?

**HILL:** It's like sometimes retirement ain't in our spirits. I thought I would retire, then I tell myself, What can I do this week? Music is very hard. You gotta stay with it.

**SKRATCH:** I think the title song of the new album, "World Peace", is one of the best songs you've ever done. You better do that tonight, right?

**HILL:** [Laughs] Oh, yes, we're going to do it.

**SKRATCH:** When you were young, when you first started out at the very beginning, who did you look up to?

**HILL:** Well, I looked right across the board—but I didn't really find satisfaction as such; I didn't real-

ly find a role model. And maybe that is the reason why I took my stick in the fight. Because everybody was singing about "Baby, I love you" and all the rest of it. But even the dogs maybe love it, or her. [Laughs] There were people which I loved their melodies but still never loved the lyrical content because it makes no sense, it was a waste of time. Like even a lovely voice like Otis Redding. I prayed that he would send us some vibrant songs. Just imagine if Otis Redding was a roots singer. Then I think about Paul Simon, "Bridge Over Troubled Water". Now, THAT was a song. It wasn't the type of militant roots that reigns today, but then there is still a rootical substance in that song. The democratic rights of the downtrodden can sometimes be political. Somebody will have to get up strong and say, "Let the hungry be fed, and let the needy be protected, and let the blind be led," because it is outright out of

order to blame the blind man because he cannot see. Somebody should wait in the line and let him or her gently cross. Not because the person's voice is loudest, but if a person has faith and spirit, let him speak.

**SKRATCH:** How's the new tour going?

**HILL:** Oh, fantastic.

**SKRATCH:** Are you at the start or the tail end of the tour here?

**HILL:** Well, we are in our starting week.

**SKRATCH:** Do you have any people from the new album like Shaggy or The Firehouse Gang with you?

**HILL:** No, I got my original band.

**SKRATCH:** Your original band? The original Culture?

**HILL:** Yes. You know, the other day I was in Europe, and somebody told me of the greatest



# "THE FIRST REVOLUTION I WAS THERE, THE SECOND REVOLUTION I WAS THERE..."

thing about a song I've ever done. A man was in a coma for like seven weeks or eight weeks, and they were all there around his bedside. They started playing some music, and they put "The Two Sevens" on...

SKRATCH: "The Two Sevens Clash"?

HILL: ...And he opened his eyes.

SKRATCH: No way.

HILL: Yes. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: That was your biggest hit ever. "Two Sevens Clash" was off the first Culture album, right?

HILL: Yes. But you know, that even makes it bigger. I waking a man from his coma was like a great

miracle. It was like when Jesus turned the water into wine.

SKRATCH: That was awesome. That was a good miracle there.

HILL: Yes. Spirit was flowing through, you know?

SKRATCH: I heard a story once about Sierra Leone, that you were there during a revolution?

HILL: Yes. On two occasions I happen to be in Sierra Leone when they have a revolution. The first revolution I was there, the second revolution I was there.... You know what? In both revolutions, Christmas catch me there. That was the first Christmas in my life that I saw electricity.

SKRATCH: Whoa.

HILL: [Laughs] Yes. And the only music they had was when I actually walked to the president and said to the president, "Then, are all the people guilty of wrongdoing that not even the children can enjoy a little music for the night? Let's turn on the light." And they turn on the light. And we get to see one concert at least.

SKRATCH: I heard the rebels put down their arms and came to the concert. That's the story I heard.

HILL: Yes. Twice. On both occasions the rebels publicly declared that they would not fight while I was there. At that same time the riots got so bad that anybody who was not fighting on their side they asked, "What kind of sleeve would you wear?" And when anybody declares long or short sleeves, if you were wearing a long sleeve, they cut off your hands right here; and if you

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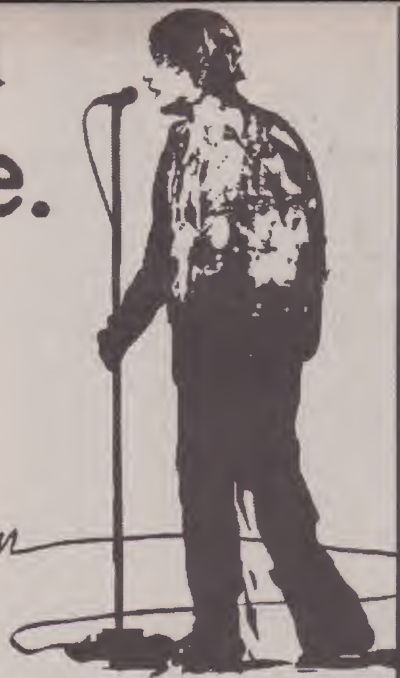
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were wearing a short sleeve, they cut it off up here. And I have seen the hands of babes get amputated. Terrible happenings, you know? Then after that concert, the only music I heard was the ocean. There was a palm tree beside the guest house where I stayed, and there was a bird that came there in the morning and in the evening and made a loud singing. And I would enjoy that so much. And you know what? I took the note of what he was singing, and I made a bass line from it and made a song.

SKRATCH: Really?

HILL: On the PAYDAY album—it's called "War and Tyranny and War in Africa".

SKRATCH: You improvise a lot on stage?

HILL: Yeah. You got to reach the people on the level that they're at.

SKRATCH: You're very popular in Europe. Do you have a favorite venue, a favorite place to play?

HILL: France and Africa. Still, I've never lost a crowd in Germany. I've never lost a crowd in Holland. Holland is another super, super favorite.

SKRATCH: Oh, I'll bet. Did you play in Amsterdam?

HILL: Yep. We played Paradiso. And we played Rotterdam. We played the whole Belgian circuit, right into Germany. Back-to-back, Italy, back-to-back, Spain—from sea to sea.

SKRATCH: In what part of Jamaica were you born?

HILL: Well, I was born in the parish of St. Catherine in Jamaica. Now I reside in Kingston—you know, the busier part, where most of the recording studios are. The old folks would say, "Where you find dirt that is

where you put your shovel." [Laughs]

SKRATCH: So it's 27 albums now?

HILL: 38.

SKRATCH: When you first started it was African Disciples, right?

HILL: Yes, but unfortunately that name never reached the road; it only reached as far as the studio. When we started singing, the production manager asked, "What should we call these guys?" And they asked us, "Well, what's your name?" And when we told them our name, they said "It's going to be changed today." "What?" I said. Then they talked among themselves, "Well, what shall we call them? Culture."

SKRATCH: If you had something to say today—and you always have something to say—if you wanted to get a word out to the world about anything, what would you say to young people?

HILL: I would urge the world to listen to WORLD PEACE. For those who like to sit at home, today is not the day to sit home when there is a reggae show of our caliber. Now is the time of DSH—which is "don't stay home." When you go to a reggae concert of this caliber, come early with an intention to stay late.

SKRATCH: You have always been very positive, like telling people not to be lazy, to get the word out, get up and do it.

HILL: Get up and do something for yourself. You know something? No matter how bad the government is, or no matter how good the government is, no matter how lush the economy or the budget is, there isn't a single line in there for a sluggard. You are not being provided for.

SKRATCH: Thank you very much for your time Mr. Hill, we appreciate it. And have a great show tonight.

HILL: Aye.



# eastern youth

## *eastern youth eastern youth*

EASTERN YOUTH  
By Marcia Taylor

Eastern Youth is one of Japan's most popular independent bands, hosting regular live concerts that are always packed. The trio cites Western punk, hardcore, and indie rock as its inspiration. The band has also toured with such notable American acts as At the Drive-In, Jimmy Eat World, Cursive, and No Knife. In fact, Eastern Youth is scheduled to tour the U.S. with Cursive for three weeks this September. Influenced by Japan's classic literature (as well as by growing up in a rural part of the country), vocalist/guitarist Hisashi Yoshino uses nature as a metaphor in many of his songs. Most of you will not be able to tell, however, because he chooses to sing in Japanese rather than in English. Other members of the band are Atsuya Tamori on drums and Tomokazu Ninomiya on bass. If you like rich melodies and impassioned vocals, you'll really enjoy Eastern Youth's sound.

Yoshino answered some e-mail questions for SKRATCH, which hopefully will make

you more  
eager to  
hear the  
group's latest  
release.  
WHAT CAN  
YOU SEE  
FROM YOUR  
PLACE?

SKRATCH:  
How would  
you describe  
your music to  
someone  
who hasn't  
heard it?

YOSHINO: It's  
mixed music  
with major  
influences  
from the  
hardcore  
punk that  
came out of  
the U.K. and

U.S., as well as the independent music scene that followed it. We are also influenced by the Japanese culture and music experience that we grew up with.

SKRATCH: Your press release describes your music as "expressing the sense of helplessness among Japanese youth." What is it about contemporary Japanese culture that makes its youth feel helpless? How is this helplessness expressed by them (musically and otherwise)?

YOSHINO: I guess it comes from the instability of the society. We still can't see exit from our current recession, and because of that

more people are committing suicide, losing homes, and are forced to live on the street. The chaos here is causing the destruction of logical thought, and I think what was the common sense of right and wrong is becoming questionable. I think in these circumstances it is becoming hard for young people to have hope for the future. Anyway, I am not trying to specifically express the "sense of helplessness"; I write about things encountered in daily life—whether visible or invisible—and what kind of view they create in my mind. They are all basic themes for artistic expression.

SKRATCH: What are the advantages or disadvantages of singing your lyrics in Japanese, as far as your non-Japanese speaking audience is concerned?

YOSHINO: I think there are no advantages or disadvantages: the difference is what it is.

SKRATCH: Where are your favorite places to play outside of Japan, and why?

YOSHINO: San Francisco, the reason being that a group of Asians (non-Japanese) show up and give us support when we play there. We are really pleasantly surprised. I also like Phoenix, AZ, because we feel welcomed there, as well.

SKRATCH: Having grown up in a small town, do you prefer small-town life to Tokyo? Why?

YOSHINO: Yes, I prefer small-town life, because it is calmer.

SKRATCH: What aspects of Western punk music most affect Eastern Youth's music?

YOSHINO: We have been influenced by '80s British hardcore punk and such U.S. labels as Dischord and Kill Rock Stars. It's hard to answer this in a paragraph, since many aspects of the punk scene influence us. However, I can say that the music was really shocking to me big time when I first heard it. The first time I listened to punk, it was like, "What is it?"; then, "It's awesome!"; and, finally, "Our music has arrived!" Since then, I've been crazy about punk. I also was very influenced by the stance of the independent music scene that viewed music as art and not a product. Watching the free expression of my favorite labels, Dischord, and the Olympia, WA, scene has been especially thrilling to me.

SKRATCH: What do you think that Japanese youth and American youth have in common? What is very different about their experiences?

YOSHINO: Currently, Japan is hugely influenced by American culture that was imported here after World War II. In that sense, we could say there are many similarities among lifestyle and sense of values. However, since the languages, customs, and sense of values are originally different in each country, we could say, "Much is different." It would be difficult to pick out the differences one-by-one, since we are all different individuals, but if I had to pick

an example, we Japanese tend to like to eat this stuff called "natto," which is fermenting soy beans, while I am sure most Americans cannot eat it. It [is telling of] the big difference between us.

SKRATCH: What are some of the differences between the current Japanese music scene and the current American music scene?

YOSHINO: I think it could be easy to find out the difference of the sense in the melodies if we compare the national anthems of both countries. Even though we use the same instruments, the sense underneath the Japanese and American anthems are really different. Therefore, I think the melodies of the music and selection of the words will naturally be really dif-



ferent. I think the reason is that what we see every day in our lives and the reflecting views are completely different in each country. I think the scenes in both countries are not much different; however, I feel most bands in Japan have a strong longing for the U.S. style of music. I think there are many bands that are satisfied to just copy the U.S. style. There are some people coming up with something of originality, but not many. It seems you can sell more records if you make U.S.-style music. I think there are two different [types of] independent labels: one set of labels is a unique place to express your music, rather than going for commercial appeal—which is as it should be; the other set of labels is like the second league of major labels. We call them "indies."

SKRATCH: Are you a fan of anime? If so, what anime do you like?

YOSHINO: There is some that I like. There is a movie called AKIRA, which was interesting because it's really well-done science fiction.



# STREET DOGS

Street Dogs  
By Sarah Laidlaw

Remember Dropkick Murphys' original singer, Mike McColgan? Remember his disappearance from the punk-rock world in 1998? Well, he has risen again in a new form: as the singer of a new punk band, Street Dogs. After spending four years working to save lives as a Boston firefighter, he has found the time to once again change lives through music. Mike is continuing his dream job as a firefighter while working to make Street Dogs the best it can be. All

Fingers, Street Dogs stick to the basics of punk rock. Through "blood, sweat, and tears," Street Dogs have created their first record, SAVIN HILL, with a message that identifies with the lives of every person who has a will and fights for a way.

After talking with Mike over the phone, I couldn't help but think what a truly feeling and hard-working man he is. He explained to me why he is this way, and why Street Dogs reflects these values.

SKRATCH: What originally sparked your love for music?

MIKE: In junior high, I started listening to The Clash, Elvis Costello, and Stiff Little Fingers. My friend had an electric guitar and a small amp, and he would try to play along with our CDs, and I would grab a mic and try to sing along.

SKRATCH: Why do you think it was punk rock

that first drew you into the music scene?

MIKE: I can honestly say that The Clash was the first band I ever connected with and was moved by. It is said that [The Clash] was the only band that ever mattered, and I can agree with that. You can smell the rebellion

and the legitimacy in their music. I heard The Clash [...], and I have been following punk rock ever since.

SKRATCH: How have you seen the music scene change in Boston from the years of playing in Dropkick Murphys to now?

MIKE: When I played in DKM from 1996 to 1998, Boston was all about street punk. In the years I was not playing with a band, I saw the city shift to hardcore; but now the pendulum is swinging back towards punk. I have seen punk rock rearing its ugly head again locally and nationally because that's what kids want to hear and that's what they connect with.

SKRATCH: What do you think of the attention given to bands that are defined as punk rock but are far from the original categorization—bands like Good Charlotte and New Found Glory?

MIKE: In my humble opinion, these sorts of bands are not punk rock. However, with each new generation, music changes. '90s punk is not the same as 1977 punk—and that is not the same as the '80s British punk. In the mid '90s, music took on a more melodic sound, and that affected what we know as punk rock.

SKRATCH: Does it bother you that many people refer to you as Dropkick Murphys old singer before calling you Street Dogs' singer?

MIKE: No. I am not ashamed of my past, and I have no bad feelings towards DKM. I left with no bad blood, and we are still friends. But I do want Street Dogs to stand on its own. Street Dogs is different from DKM, and I want people to recognize that—and I think they will.

SKRATCH: I know you are always asked this, but I have to: Do you ever regret leaving Dropkick Murphys?

MIKE: When I left DKM, I anticipated regretting it later, but it never happened. I have stayed in touch with them, and I support them and they support me. In fact, some of DKM's members are on Street Dogs' new album.

SKRATCH: What did you do music-wise in the four years you were not playing with a band?

MIKE: I jammed with friends every once in a while and I continued to write. That is something I always do: write. When Jeff and Rob came to me to form Street Dogs, I already had lyrics written to a bunch of songs.

SKRATCH: What prompted Street Dogs' decision to sign with Crosscheck Records?

MIKE: Crosscheck's sincerity caught my attention, and they gave us honest control over our own destiny. We have no complaints about Crosscheck. They work hard for us and back us, and we back them in return.

SKRATCH: Do you think Street Dogs is handicapped by your firefighter career?

MIKE: No. We do everything we can, and if people do not find that acceptable, well, they know where they can go. We play and tour as much as we can while still maintaining structured, normal lives. We are big boys, and we know what we have to do, and we will do it.

SKRATCH: You have your dream job, and you are a successful musician. Are there any other goals you have that are yet to be fulfilled?



of Street Dogs are reputable members of the Boston music community, and they have come together to form a powerful punk-rock band. With influences including The Clash, Bad Religion, Bouncing Souls, NOFX, Pennywise, Rancid, The Ramones, and Stiff Little



# KUNG FU

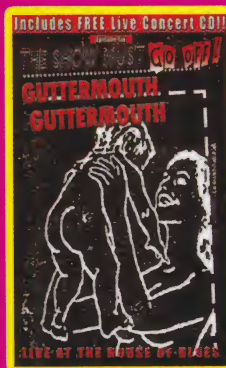
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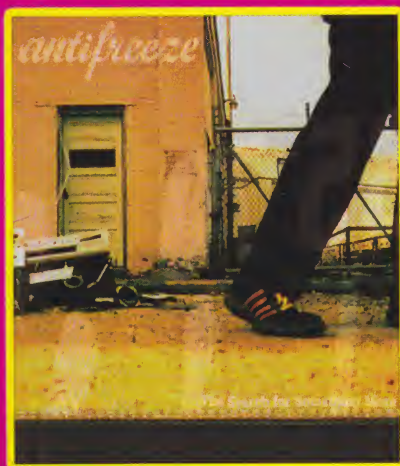


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# THE HIGHER

The image is a promotional poster for the band The Higher. It features a central image of a wooden ladder leaning against a dark, starry background, possibly representing a night sky or a deep space. The top of the poster has an orange background with black scribbles, and the bottom has a green grassy field. The text is arranged in a way that is easy to read and visually appealing.

THE HIGHER  
star is dead

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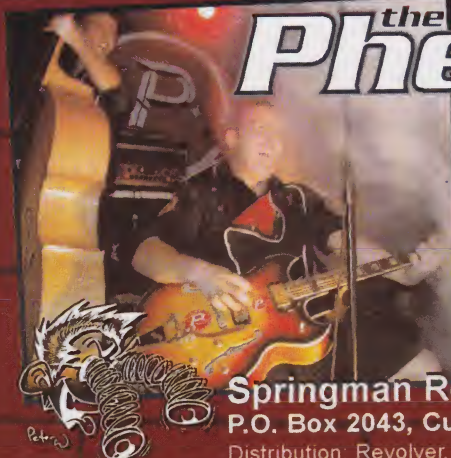
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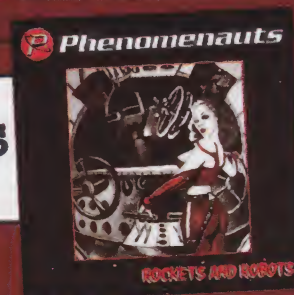
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Photo: Roman Roth



MIKE: I believe you should give every second of your life your all and do the best you can. I also believe you should live your life for this moment and not any other. I am doing what I want to do right now. My concerns are to be a good friend and a good family member. Also, I am getting married next September, and a very important goal for me is to keep my relationship with my fiancé strong and healthy.

SKRATCH: What drives you to play your music the way that you do?

MIKE: Punk rock is where we are as a band. We have always known it and have always been influenced by it. I don't think we necessarily chose to play punk rock, because I think that punk rock sometimes chooses you. I heard that from a writer at a magazine in Boston, and it really hit me hard, because that's what happened to me. Punk rock is something that is inside of me, and it is impossible not to let it come out.

SKRATCH: What affects your writing?

MIKE: Everyday living and existence, from work to relationships, family to friends, and past to future. I sing what I know. It is simple, but it is sincere and real.

SKRATCH: What do you want people to learn or get out of Street Dogs' music?

MIKE: I want people to never be ashamed of who they are and learn to be tolerant of their own situations and of the people around them. Also, everyone needs to find a way to say what they feel and use it. That's what I have done.

SKRATCH: Where do you think Street Dogs will go in the future?

MIKE: I don't know. I just want us to continue to create and play music and to make records. That is important to me. I don't care about having a big house, a yacht, and a platinum album hanging on my wall; I just want to make records. Besides that, I know we will stick together and always have each other's backs.

SKRATCH: Is there anything I missed that you want people to know?

MIKE: Street Dogs are housebroken, don't have fleas, and will travel. So, go Street Dogs!

To find out more about Street Dogs, visit [www.streetdogs.com](http://www.streetdogs.com). And, as Mike said, go Street Dogs!

**"PUNK ROCK IS WHERE WE ARE AS A BAND. WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN IT AND HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INFLUENCED BY IT. I DON'T THINK WE NECESSARILY CHOSE TO PLAY PUNK ROCK, BECAUSE I THINK THAT PUNK ROCK SOMETIMES CHOOSES YOU."**



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# THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE

The Great Redneck Hope  
By Sarah Laidlaw

My first contact with The Great Redneck Hope was receiving their biography in the mail. It was sent to me handwritten across the naked body of an old man on a page that they informed me was torn out of the pornographic magazine DADDY. This is important to know, because it reflects this band's character preciously. The Great Redneck Hope originates from Colorado Springs, CO, with a sound that will shatter windows and society's norms. A wide variety of influences—from "sad sucker old people music" to "trance" to hip-hop—creates a convoluted sound that somehow sends a clear message. The message? Question your values, your ideas, and yourself. After speaking with The Great Redneck Hope over the Internet, I found its members not only forge their music from this concept, they also carry it into every aspect of their lives—even into the most natural act of defecating. Here is just a taste of The Great Redneck Hope's imagination that is its reality. And, as the band reminded me, "you'll forgive the tone. We're just trying to be sassy!"

**SKRATCH:** What do you think hardcore is all about?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** The point of hardcore is not really any different than the point of any other independent music.

Its isolation from other sub-genres of independent music is utter bullshit. The heavy nature of our music has lumped us into the hardcore genre, but we SHOULD be labeled based on how we go about doing things. To us, the idea of hardcore is mainly routed through the punk-rock ethic of doing what you want how you want. Besides all of this, hardcore is all about fat guys in little pink bunny costumes. That, and blow, piles and piles of sweet Colombian blow.

**SKRATCH:** What is The Great Redneck Hope all about?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** We're essentially in this to alienate people from conventional ideas of music. At the risk of sounding pretentious, we want to challenge preconceptions of what punk rock (or hardcore, or whatever) should be. I think this carries into everyday life and the way we interact as people and as musicians. Other than that, we try to come up with fucked-up stuff to amuse ourselves and to keep ourselves interested.

**SKRATCH:** At first glance, your lyrics sound like they exist just to be humorous. But it seems like you have some deeper meanings behind them. What are these?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** Everyone's political, but this isn't and shouldn't be seen as the focal point of our band. We aren't in a band to enact any sweeping political

change, because there are bands that are better educated and more articulate on the subject. Our lyrics are primarily personal in that we sing and scream about our tricked-out 24s and having sex with reptiles. This doesn't mean that we're a joke band. These are pertinent issues for today's youth, baby. In other words, we're enigmatic.

**SKRATCH:** What made you want to be in a band?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** Chicks. Next question.

**SKRATCH:** How did you decide to play hardcore?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** The Magic Eight Ball had a lot to do with it. We were almost a salsa-funk-fusion group called, ¡Ay! ¡Mí Huevos!

**SKRATCH:** How did you come up with your band name?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** It's a line from the movie ERNEST SCARED STUPID. You'll notice this makes us pretty wicked.

**SKRATCH:** After touring around the U.S., do you wish you could call somewhere else your hometown?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** Well, it's the difference between wanting to play somewhere and actually wanting to live somewhere. We were all really impressed with Providence, Seattle, Boston, and Richmond, among other places. You can

view it as a regional phenomenon. The music that we play and the bands we like tend to originate in those areas. To us, any place where a lot of creative people congregate is a bitchin' place. On the other hand, living in Norway would be fantastic because we'd get to burn down churches and desecrate graves. That shit doesn't fly here. Lousy cops.

**SKRATCH:** When did your tour start? When does it end? Who were you touring with?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** Our tour started on July 2nd and ended on August 13th. We didn't do the entire tour with anyone, but we had a number of few-day-long stints with some bands. Said bands of awesomeness included Fed By Fiction, Jared Grabb, Tyranny of Shaw, Adore Miridia, the Autokinoton, and The August I Had. We were also able to meet up with our buddies from Transistor Transistor, Light the Fuse, and Run for a couple of shows, which was rad to the max.

**SKRATCH:** Have you toured before? If so, where?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** This was our third tour. We've toured throughout the South, Southwest, Southeast, and Midwest. This last one took us pretty much everywhere except for Canada, because Canucks frighten us.



**SKRATCH:** Besides playing, driving, eating, and sleeping, what do you guys do while you are on the road?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** We defecate a lot, but I guess that's a corollary of eating. The interesting thing is that we defecate in novel places, like your kitchen sink. We have a game where we poop in a river and try to collide the poop with people downstream. This is more fun than it sounds. There are also van-related pastimes when we're touring with other bands. They involve highly dangerous stunt-driving and shooting condiments out of slingshots. We party hearty. In other words, we

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** Don't you know anything about being awesome?

**SKRATCH:** What is with the naked old-man picture that you wrote your biography on?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** The naked man originates from a magazine called DADDY that caters to hairy old-man fetishes. DADDY was picked up in a gay bar in Baltimore. That particular gentleman is our singer's dad. Did you notice the cock ring?



**"There are also van-related pastimes when we're touring with other bands. They involve highly dangerous stunt-driving and shooting condiments out of slingshots."**

tend to keep ourselves busy aided by a lot of creativity and a disregard for social taboos. We get naked.

**SKRATCH:** If you could realize any three wishes, what would they be?

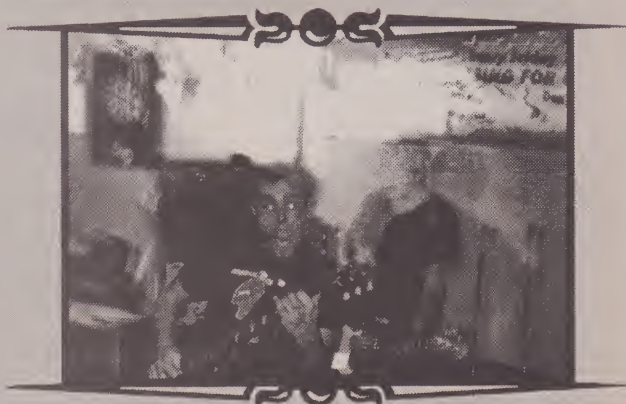
**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** 1) Save all the dolphins. 2) Put dolphins into magical dolphin coolers for later consumption. 3) Consume dolphins at a big party held for world peace.

**SKRATCH:** Why are the track numbers on your latest CD, 'SPLOSION!', listed in French?

**SKRATCH:** Is there anything else you want to say to all the SKRATCH-reading-kiddies out there?

**THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE:** First off, if you'd like to know what we really do on tour, there's a link to the diary through our Website. Other than that, we highly encourage you to get awesome. Surf! How big these rims is? No, seriously. Posit a guess.

The Great Redneck Hope's Website is ; and, if you would like to "posit a guess" about the rims, e-mail [thegreatredneck-hope@hotmail.com](mailto:thegreatredneck-hope@hotmail.com).



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# Streetlight Manifesto

## STREETLIGHT MANIFESTO

By Don Sill

New Jersey's Streetlight Manifesto may be a new band, but it is comprised of seasoned veterans to the ska/punk scene. It is a joint venture between ex-members of Catch 22 and One Cool Guy, including Josh Ansley (bass), Jamie Egan (trombone), Tomas Kalnoky (guitar, vocals, and songwriting), Dan Ross (saxophone), Jim Conti (percussion), Paul Lowndes (drums), and Shane Thompson (percussion). The group signed to Victory Records in December of 2002 and are setting out to bring a different brand of ska to the scene. Their debut album, **EVERYTHING GOES NUMB**, combines syncopated ska guitars, manic horns, and driving punk rhythms with frontman Tomas Kalnoky's raspy vocals. Bored with "boy meets girl" and "I hate my life" premises, Kalnoky set out to write songs that demonstrate his growth as both a musician and a man, taking a more serious approach toward the lyrics. By combining the ska sound with the urgency of traditional punk, Streetlight Manifesto have developed a sound and style all their own.

keep us calm. But it turned out that some schmuck messed something up or a power grid went down, so luckily it wasn't anything devious.

**SKRATCH: What happened to your dad?**

**KALNOKY:** He was stuck there for the whole night. We were lucky: we're in central Jersey and we didn't lose any electricity.

**SKRATCH: Oh, man, you guys lucked out.**

**KALNOKY:** [Laughs] Yeah, we were completely untouched. But I heard about all of those block parties and stuff going on in the City, and it sounded really cool.

**SKRATCH: Everyone had one big party that night.**

**KALNOKY:** I think a lot of it has to do with September 11th—and, more importantly, what happened after September 11th, when everyone came together and stuff. People seemed so shocked that there was no looting and no riots or whatever during the

**SKRATCH: How do you mean?**

**KALNOKY:** See, we're a lot more minor-keyed and a lot more serious than other stuff in this genre, and that's one of the reasons why we stand [apart] from everyone else. We're not singing about girls and break-ups and stuff; we're more serious than that. Well, that's how we look at it, at least, you know? I'm not sure how it's perceived or if people caught on to it like we hope they will, but that's how we see ourselves.

**SKRATCH: So, you guys are taking the ska sound and giving it a more serious edge?**

**KALNOKY:** Yeah, we're trying to definitely focus on different themes and just keep it more serious, because we've all grown. We all still love ska by all means, but we're older now and we have older themes and whatnot to explore in music right now.

**SKRATCH: Would you say that you're taking the whole ska sound to a different level?**

**SKRATCH: Are you a Fox guy or a CNN guy?**

**KALNOKY:** I'm actually a CNN.com guy. I'm on the Internet all the time getting updates on the Middle East and how it's gonna affect us and affect the world.

**SKRATCH: What does the future look like in your opinion?**

**KALNOKY:** I don't know, man. The more I see what I see going on this world, the more strongly I wanna just take off and move to the mountains of Colorado or something and raise family. No TV or anything—just get back to the roots. I'm leaning toward [being] a hermit. I like to be politically aware and stuff, but I don't consider myself to be an activist or anything. I'm kinda turned off by [...] how everybody hates and everything, and I just want to get away from all of that and raise my family Grizzly Adams style up in the mountains.

**SKRATCH: Just like Ted Kaczynski.**  
[Laughs]



*"We're not singing about girls and break-ups and stuff, we're more serious than that. Well, that's how we look at it, at least..."*

**SKRATCH** spoke with singer/guitarist Tomas Kalnoky over the summer and chewed the fat about the new album and why he wants to raise his family in the mountains.

**SKRATCH: You're from New Jersey. Where were you during the big blackout last month?**

**KALNOKY:** I was home. See, I'm a Jersey boy and a Southern boy. I've been living in Savannah, GA, for the last five years now; but I was here in Jersey for the blackout. It was fine for us, but my father just happened to be in the City that day, so everyone in my family was worried. They were all like, "Holy shit—it's a terrorist attack!"

**SKRATCH: Yeah, everyone was like, "What's coming next?"**

**KALNOKY:** Totally. For the first few hours everyone was convinced that there was some kind of terrorist activity, and everyone was just keeping it quite to

blackout, and I like to think that it was an indirect outcome of 9/11, you know? Everyone has a feeling that anything can happen at any moment, and there is a lot more [of a sense of] community going on. [...]

**SKRATCH: Yeah, there is a much greater sense of unity in the City since then—and that blackout proved it.**

**KALNOKY:** Yeah, it was like a test, and I think it worked out brilliantly.

**SKRATCH: Dude, let's talk about this new album, **EVERYTHING GOES NUMB**.**

**KALNOKY:** Well, obviously from the first listen, it's kinda like a ska album; but we don't really wanna go the whole typical ska route—you know, the happy, cheesy ska. So [the album is] a bit more dark than most SKA albums, and we kind of approached it like a regular record.

**KALNOKY:** Ahhh...Not really. That probably a little too grandiose. [Laughs] We don't wanna look at ourselves like. It's not that big a deal, you know? I wouldn't say "taking it to another level" but just shooting off the side of it. I mean, I'm not gonna sit here and make it like we're inventing a whole new sound or whatever; we're just taking all of our influences and our whole background and mixing them with some of the serious things that are going on in our adult lives now.

**SKRATCH: Has the current state of the world—with all this terrorism and war and stuff—inspired your music at all?**

**KALNOKY:** Not in terms of lyrics and stuff. I don't really write about what's going on in the world all that much; it's more personal. But I think that what's going on in the world influences the tone and the seriousness of the music. I mean, I'm a complete news junkie, and I'm up to date with everything.

**KALNOKY:** Yeah, right...only I don't plan on bombing anybody. [Laughs]

**SKRATCH: Yeah, the state of the world is really frustrating right now, and it's hard to write tongue-in-cheek music in these times—so I guess you have to buckle up and get serious.**

**KALNOKY:** Yeah. And I think that in the '90s a lot of it was throwaway music. The subjects were too light and [...] too repetitive; and nowadays the big thing is writing about girls and [...] ex-girlfriends; and I don't really want to be a part of that, either. Not only are there a million other bands doing that—and it's working great for them—but it's just not something that interests me.

For now, Streetlight Manifesto are prepping to begin touring the States by the fall. You can check out their Website for updates and information at [www.streetlightmanifesto.com](http://www.streetlightmanifesto.com).



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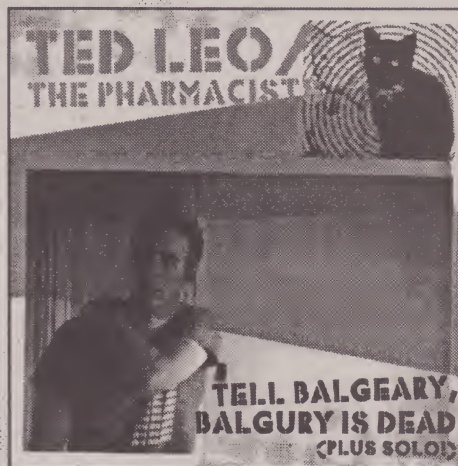
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# Yancey

Yancey  
By Sarah Laidlaw

I had trouble finding Yancey to do this interview because they were broken up when I was trying to get in contact with them. However, the break-up lasted only three months, and now they are back rocking together. This behavior is somewhat of a routine for Yancey, but their on-and-off relationship—which reminds me of having a boyfriend I can't live without—has not stopped their progress. They have toured throughout the U.S., have two CDs recorded, and have been part of one of SKRATCH's compilations. They admit to getting overwhelmed by tours and each other, but they refuse to even think of the possibility of living without playing in Yancey (as I recently discovered via e-mail).

SKRATCH: When and how did you start out?

BIG JUICY: We've known each other for about eight years now. In 1997, I started teaching myself to play bass.

DON: At that time I was truck driving, but [ then ] I decided to start playing guitar again. So when I was in town, Juicy and I would get together and play. Then, all I did was call my brother

Taylor, who plays drums, and that's when the band began.

SKRATCH: How long have all of you been playing music?

DON: I've been playing guitar for 11 years.

JUICY: Six years.

NATE: Three-and-a-half years.

SKRATCH: What keeps you playing?

JUICY: I love being creative, and I love playing with friends and family.

NATE: I couldn't stand not to.

SKRATCH: What do you do outside of Yancey?

NATE: I'm part owner of a small record store in northwest Phoenix.

DON: I'm a truck driver.

JUICY: I manage the maintenance department and dive team at a marina in Arizona.

SKRATCH: Can you give me a summary of the major events in Yancey's history?

DON: I guess the first major event was when we lost Taylor. That made me decide to quit truck driving to focus more on the band.

JUICY: When Taylor left, a guy named Bam Bam volunteered to take his place as our drummer.

DON: He only played with us for a handful of shows (which [ covered ] four months) because he had obligations with other projects. He committed to us, [ but ] then left us stranded with no drummer again.

JUICY: We haven't seen him since. Don't let me catch him in a dark alley alone. He's fucked up!

DON: [ Laughs ] Yeah, he really fucked us over.

NATE: After that is when I came into the picture as the new drummer. I had been Yancey's roadie for a while, and I had never played drums before. I picked up my first pair of sticks and started playing with the band in 2000.

DON: But Nate really clicked. From there, we recorded a four-song demo,

did a three-week tour in California, and toured the Southeast. The touring and recording wiped us out, and we decided to take a break. The break lasted a year before we got back together doing what we love.

JUICY: Then there was no fucking around. When we got back together, we bought recording equipment, built a recording studio, and did nothing but practice and record.

SKRATCH: You recently broke up for three months. What happened then?

NATE: What's with all this talk about breaking up? Really, we just push ourselves to destruction, and then we rebuild.

DON: We needed to get a few personal and political differences taken care of before we moved on.

NATE: We share different political views between us, and it's been difficult at times—especially at wartime. Another thing was that I was in the process of opening a record store at that time.

DON: During our break-up, I bought a new 18-wheeler and started driving again.

JUICY: I was upset with that break-up, but I ended up filling in with a local band, 37Grit, because their bass player broke his arm. I played a few shows with them in some places that I had never been, and it was cool.

SKRATCH: If you had to categorize your music, how would you describe it?

DON: It's difficult to say. A good friend from Wyoming described us as experimental hardcore. We laughed at first, but now it seems to make sense.

SKRATCH: Name a band your world could not live without.

JUICY: Avail.

DON: Avail.

NATE: Hot Water Music.



**A good friend from Wyoming described us as experimental hardcore: We laughed at first, but now it seems to make sense..."**

SKRATCH: Explain why you used Yancey (Don's last name) as your band name.

JUICY: I just came up with the idea one day when Don and I were writing songs.

DON: We were pretty sure my brother was going to join, and it is hard to decide on a name. Fuck, Van Halen did it, so why can't we?

SKRATCH: I know you've been on tour before. Tell me about that.

NATE: This last tour was our most successful. We were lucky to play shows with Velvet Teen (Santa Rosa, CA), Napier (Cheyenne, WY), Hello Amsterdam (SLC, UT), Dr. Neptune (Ft. Collins, CO), and several other good bands. Touring is by far the most amazing thing in the world...except that we usually break up shortly after a tour. Maybe we shouldn't tour anymore. [Laughs]

DON: I'm a truck driver, so I love being on the road. And, when my band is there...I can't even put it into words. It's truly an unbelievable experience.

JUICY: The places, the people, and the music...It's truly amazing.

SKRATCH: What sort of response did you get in other towns? What was your favorite place to play?

JUICY: Petaluma, CA, was the first night. After that, I was ready to quit. It was a ska show, and we got zero response. [The audience] just looked confused.

DON: The second night we ran into some friends in the band The Velvet Teen, and they let us open for them at the Phoenix Theater. That crowd was more our style. From then on, even though most of our shows were pretty small, we always had a good response from the kids, especially in Cheyenne. They were great and knew how to take care of touring bands.

SKRATCH: I saw you play at a house party in Phoenix. What's more fun: house parties or venues?

NATE: House shows are great because we're more relaxed. However, the thrill of playing on a stage in front of a bunch of people is equally fun. I personally like the nervousness of the venue.

JUICY: House shows are fucking fun. Shows are the best when playing with friends. We just played a show with our friends' band, SignSedSo (Bloomington, IL) at Nate's record store,

Westside Records. That was great show.

DON: I love small shows, especially house shows. Everybody is there to have a good time, and the band is on the same level as everyone else.

SKRATCH: What do you see for the future of Yancey?

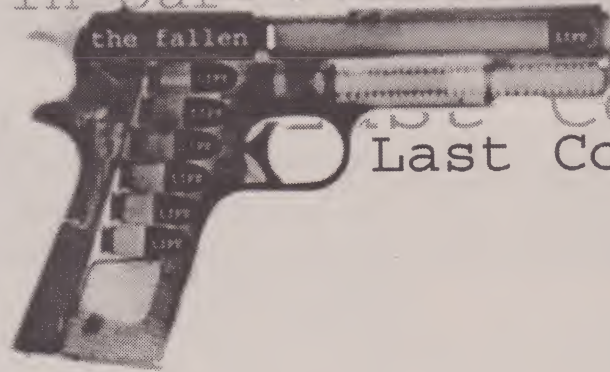
DON: Despite our past problems, I see us all being in this band forever. There is an overwhelming feeling I get [while playing with Yancey], and I can never see myself playing with anyone else. Not to mention we get along really well, I guess it's not about being a band as much as it is about being friends.

JUICY: Well, we'll just continue doing what we're doing: touring any chance we get, playing local shows, and keeping it real.

NATE: We are incredibly loyal to each other, and we fully embrace the do-it-yourself philosophy. so we will keep playing together and working hard. Our goal is to inspire others, stay happy, and rock.

If you want tour dates, a CD, or just to say "hi," contact Yancey at or call (602) 863-3133.

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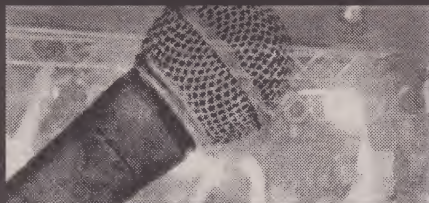
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# SHOW REVIEWS

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## THE MARS VOLTA SAUL WILLIAMS RYE COALITION

July 18, 2003 @ Irving Plaza (New York City)

By Aaron Lefkove

Friday evening, July 18th, New York City's Irving Plaza played host to a taste of the hot sounds that are now starting to come out of the underground. I arrived early at a packed house, which was surprising considering that the first band of the evening, Dirty Jerz's own Rye Coalition, was just taking the stage. Longtime fans will recognize that these underground mainstays have been chugging away for close to a decade now and that their music has undergone some steady changes. Whereas the band once played post-hardcore/indie rock à la Fugazi, now they have morphed and grown into a sound that tends to resemble a latter-day Led Zeppelin. Monster rock riffs and simmering leads come courtesy of the two dueling guitarists in a way that would make the members of Lynyrd Skynyrd grin from ear to ear. The rhythm section anchored the band through a half-hour's worth of classic rock jams, while the grizzled frontman carried the tunes like a road warrior. These guys have been getting a lot of attention recently—and rightly so after nine years of chugging it out on the club circuit. When they finally drop their Dreamworks debut, you better watch the fuck out!

Next up was Saul Williams with a set of poetry-tinged spoken word. Williams took the stage armed only with a mic, a bottle of water, and a 20-foot scroll of his rants. Although he was a one-man act for the first half of the show, his diatribes on everything from racial equality to the belittling of women to his childhood held the capacity crowd at bay. A show stopper was Williams's tongue-in-cheek spoken-word rendition of a work by the Jigga man himself, Jay-Z (whom he deemed to be New York City's "poet laureate"): "Big Pimpin'". Halfway through the set, Williams invited onstage two old friends, a percussionist and a trumpeter, for an impromptu jazz jam. The percussionist laid down the steady beats while the trumpeter jammed out in his own universe, creating a textured sonic soundscape for Williams's sometimes spoken, sometimes rapped (but always heated and urgent) words. Although I am someone who is not at all a fan of spoken-word acts, I was won over.

After an unusually long set change (how long does it take for a one-man spoken-word act to break his equipment down, anyways?), the evening's headliners took the stage. Rising out of the ashes of the now legendary At the Drive-In, The Mars Volta blend their post-hardcore sensibility with influences as far-reaching as traditional Latino rhythms, free jazz, and Afro beat. The band commanded the eager New York City masses while blasting through their latest opus, DE-LOUSED IN THE COMATORIUM, in its entirety. For those who never saw ATDI and who have not seen this mew incarnation, The Mars Volta don't just take the stage, they own it! Cedric

Bixler, the band's Afroed frontman, writhes about, repeatedly throwing himself on the ground, draping himself over the drums, convulsing in epileptic fits—and all without missing a beat, slurring a lyric, or hitting a bad note. Seriously, this guy is a "for real" frontman, on par with greats like Robert Plant or Bruce Dickinson (due in no small part to his high-pitched vocal style). The band, on the other hand, comprised of ex-ATDI guitarist Omar Rodriguez and a cast of assorted musicians of the highest caliber, carry the backdrop for Bixler's onstage antics. There is a difference between seeing a band play their songs and seeing a band who have an intimate and spiritual connection to their music...and The Mars Volta definitely are of the second category. Each song bleeds into the next, and most of the time it is nearly impossible to tell if the band is playing from a set of standard changes or if they are merely letting the music carry them where it may, just as curious as the audience as to where they will end up. This was the first time I've seen The Mars Volta since the untimely death of longtime collaborator and electronics guru Jeremy Ward, and the band solidified on with a blistering performance. Perhaps the band's keyboard player—surrounded by a plethora of effects boxes, vintage synths, and other toys—picked up some of the slack. In any case, this is a tightly-wound musical experience that should be witnessed first-hand.

## IGGY AND THE STOOGES SONIC YOUTH THURSDAY

August 2, 2003 @ Tommy Hilfiger Jones Beach Amphitheatre (Long Island, NY)

By Aaron Lefkove

What a strange billing: the original incarnation of proto-punk pioneers Iggy and the Stooges (except for Mike Watt (Minutemen, FIREHOSE) filling in on bass) grouped with longstanding NYC art-noise rockers Sonic Youth and emo-core up-and-comers Thursday. Something for everyone, indeed—young, old, and older.

The first group out was Thursday, who are hot on the heels of their major-label debut. Now, Thursday—and most of the emo-core genre, for that matter—has never really been my cup of tea, but the band is renowned as one of the stronger live bands out there right now, and so I figured they deserved a look. Seeing as I haven't seen them since the 2001 Warped Tour, I was eagerly anticipating seeing them now tightly honed, refined from many major tours the world over. Due to unforeseen circumstances involving bumper-to-bumper traffic all the way out of the city, I pulled up just in time to catch 'em mid-set. Of course, being the good writer that

I am, I opted to bring along a camera to document the bands' onstage antics. Long story short, after getting the proper photo passes, I was all set with my camera and carrying case to go in and shoot away. Unfortunately, my new friends at the door (who we will kindly refer to as "Door Nazi") would not allow me to bring in the camera's carrying case—despite my photo credentials. So, after an altercation where more physical force than was necessary was used, I checked the bag and made it in just in time to watch Thursday breaking down their equipment. Please contact me and I will gladly send you my "Top 10 Reasons Why NOT to Patronize Tommy Assfucker's Jones Beach Amphitheatre."

Finally inside and having avoided a scuffle, I was ready for the rock. Sonic Youth, the long-standing noise-rock institution, took the stage to rabid applause from the entire venue. The band plowed through a set that spanned everything from their early CONFUSION IS SEX and DAYDREAM NATION material all the way up through their newest split EP with Erase Errata. I have seen this band many times and have never been disappointed. However, I must say that seeing them in a massive arena (instead of in the clubs I am used to) really takes away from the intensity that these guys command. Watching the band play with their bare-bones equipment on a stage that would serve as ample space for a major Broadway production or an Iron Maiden show was kind of depressing. In spite of the lack of audience/band chemistry, the band did not disappoint in the least. After nearly 20 years of playing their patented brand of rock and punk, the energy level still runs high. Kim Gordon's wail could be felt all the way up in the nosebleed section. The band was as tight, visceral, and stunning as ever.

Between sets the venue's concession area was mobbed by at least 10,000 kids in Ramones shirts, another 1,500 girls in striped shirts, no less than four people who were convinced that they were members of Hanoi Rocks, and pretty much everyone else remotely connected with rock 'n' roll in New York City. It's like they all decided to take a trip to Long Island together. Kind of strange, but enjoyable nonetheless. After a short relief from the crowds and security Nazis, inside it was time for The Stooges—the real reason why we were all there. As Iggy took the stage, the venue erupted in a fury that convinced me that, despite its sickening corporate sponsorship, punk rock was indeed alive and well at the Jones Beach Amphitheatre this evening. The band played a set of material culled from, and only from, the first two Stooges albums. Everything from "I Wanna Be Your Dog" to the bass heavy "Dirt" to "Funhouse" to "Can I Come Over" was played with a fury that felt like a throwback to seeing the band perform at legendary venues like Max's Kansas City and Andy Warhol's Factory. For an old man, Iggy Pop still has the moves down. Dancing, running, writhing, and wiggling all over the stage, Iggy never missed a note and proved that, despite the not-so-intimate setting, he was there to rock each and every person out there. This current Stooges tour—unlike The Sex Pistols and other over-the-hill has-beens who have gotten back together



of late—really shows a band who never left their prime. Perhaps this is unabashed rock fanaticism, perhaps I'm biased due to the excitement that I felt seeing a band that basically invented the sound of punk we know; but isn't that excitement the reason why we go to shows in the first place?

## **THE AQUABATS WEST COAST MINI-TOUR: THE AQUABATS THE REUNION SHOW FAIRVIEW BAD CREDIT**

August 8, 2003 @ the Glasshouse (Pomona, CA)  
By John Woods

Halloween might be once a year, but dressing up in costumes is bound to happen wherever and whenever The Aquabats take the stage. The Aquabats are now a six-piece musical outfit that still plays some of the weirdest music you've never heard. Both young and old filled the streets of Pomona, CA, for the long-awaited show featuring The Aquabats, Fairview, The Reunion Show, and Bad Credit.

The show started off with a bang when mock hip-hopsters Bad Credit came out to lay down some rhymes down. This band was clearly the best white hip-hop group ever. Not only were they fresh and solid with their music, but their comedy act alone made them worth watching. Bad Credit hit the crowd with such tracks as "You Love It, But You Diss It" and the fan favorite "Bill Gates (Owes Me Five Bucks)". Don't hesitate to see these guys play if they ever come your way.

The bands up next were Fairview and The Reunion Show. To be honest, I did not enjoy the music being played by either and found my way outside for their sets. However, many kids seemed to be really into both of the bands—and that's all that really matters.

Finally, it was The Aquabats turn. After a long, drawn-out process of waiting for their set-up to be completed, they valiantly stormed the stage. The place was a so electric that it was ready to explode. Luckily, I found myself safely within the barricade, right in front of the stage from where I could snap some photos. The Aquabats did not disappoint (they never do). They played a nearly two-hour set. Throughout the night, everyone got to hear much more than just music: there were a few dramatized fights on stage, unusual pauses in mid-action on the projection screen behind the stage to display mock-advertisements for "inventions" by The Aquabats (such as a belt for carrying pudding packs), pool parties, and crowd-surfing races. The Aquabats battled foes such as an evil space monster, which they tied up for safekeeping. Villains with poison gas also attacked them, until the aforementioned space monster thwarted their efforts. When The Aquabats played the much-anticipated song "Pool Party", the atmosphere turned into just that: inflatable rafts filled the crowd, while tons of people came on stage to dance and sing along. A short time after, The MC Bat Commander invited two young kids to come on stage and help with the next event. The boy was given an inflatable dolphin,

the girl an inflatable clam. The goal was for each of them to surf their crafts on the sea of people's hands all the way to the back wall and return to the stage before the other. In-between all this madness, The Aquabats frenzied the masses with tunes such as "The Cat with Two Heads", "Super Rad", "Giant Robot Bird Head", and "Red Sweater". This was a show not to be forgotten.

## **BELLE & SEBASTIAN BRIGHT EYES**

August 24, 2003 @ the Greek Theatre  
(Los Angeles, CA)  
By Leslie McShane

At 7:30, at a park across from the Greek Theatre, I heard the opening notes to Bright Eyes' "Method Acting", and I hurried across the street to take my seat in the then-near-empty theater nestled into the hills of Los Angeles. Conor Oberst, singer/songwriter and man behind the band Bright Eyes, was joined by his usual sidekicks. However, this show was unique because Rilo Kiley's Jenny Lewis, Blake Sennet, and Jason Boesel acted as the backing band. The buzz around this show was huge: Saddlecreek Records' sweetheart Bright Eyes opening up for indie supergroup Belle & Sebastian.

Oberst appeared to be enjoying himself in front of the sparse crowd as he performed tracks from his newest album, *LIFTED: OR THE STORY IS IN THE SOIL, KEEP YOUR EAR TO THE GROUND*, frolicking on stage with a zest usually only saved for shows in his hometown of Omaha, NE. He moved between keyboard and guitar throughout the set, proving his versatility as a musician and seemingly relishing the opportunity to play an opening set. With the special guest stars accompanying him, Oberst's songs gained a certain sweetness characteristic of Rilo Kiley. Lewis's presence was definitely felt when she sang back up on "An Attempt to Tip the Scales", her melodious voice juxtaposed with Oberst's harsh wail giving the song new life and a decidedly upbeat tone. Sennet was also an exuberant addition, his delicately twangy guitar playing capturing the country/alt-rock influences heard in Bright Eyes' later albums. Early on, the band stuck to crowd favorites, such as "Bowl of Oranges" and "I Love You, I Don't Have to Love", and "Method Acting". Later, however, four songs not yet featured on an album were played, including a cover of "Ode to Joy" and "First Day of My Life", a bitersweet love song executed with the humble skill of a finely-tuned folk singer. Another new one, "Old Soul Song", attests to a quiet acceptance of solitude. Also, the "Ode to Joy" cover conveys a mature political edge, somewhat similar to those songs of his side project, Desaparecidos. These new songs display a mature humility and humbleness not seen in his earlier works.

Known for drunken mistreatment of fans, an enthusiastic attendee took a chance when she screamed, "I love you, Conor!" He replied, "Thanks. I love you, too"—startling fans who have seen him be much less kind to those who audibilize his praises. Oberst danced, smiled, and generally appeared to be enjoying himself on stage. Perhaps it was the low attendance for the opening band or something about the cool, crisp summer night that gave this show an intimate and out-of-the-ordinary feel. Also, perhaps it was the knowledge that Scotland's Belle & Sebastian was to appear next.

Belle & Sebastian (minus integral ex-member Isobel

Campbell, who is gone to focus on her side projects) played a long but somewhat lackluster, career-spanning set that included favorites "Boy with the Arab Strap" and "I Don't Love Anyone". Their newest songs were reminiscent of the early Animals, and their performance brought to mind club scenes in 1960s' mod films. They paid homage to that influence with a cover from a song from the 1965 movie *WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?* Though the band played crowd favorites, these songs were missing intensity and passion, making the whole show a bit like listening to a greatest-hits album. The highlight of the set was during the encore, when B&S frontman Stuart Murdoch brought out Trevor Horn (producer of their yet to be released album *DEAR CAT-ASTROPHE WAITRESS* and former member of 1980s band The Buggles) for a rendition of "Video Killed the Radio Star" that had the audience—dense with hipsters—on their feet and dancing, a sight not seen in Los Angeles since the birth of electroclash. Forced to follow that inspiring tune, Belle & Sebastian ended the show with a version of "Judy and the Dream of Horse" that excited young fans to bound upon the stage unexpectedly and then dance and sing along. Conor Oberst and Jenny Lewis eventually joined the dancers.

This turned out to be one of those concerts that you brag to your friends in New York about, one that you can impress people with years down the line. But I'll remember it as the only Bright Eyes show I've seen at which Conor Oberst actually enjoyed himself.

## **THE CHECKERS RECORD RELEASE PARTY: THE CHECKERS THE DEVILETTES THE TEENAGE FRAMES**

September 5, 2003 @ Spaceland (Silverlake, CA)  
By Namella J. Kim

The Teenage Frames opened up the night with a promising note. The band was tight, the singer energetic (like Judy Garland's screen test for *A STAR IS BORN*), but, alas, the too-cool-for-school Silverlake crowd chose to stay back, as usual. The band formed in Chicago and managed to move out to L.A. with their wits about them and a modus operandi to rock. Their set was full of catchy pop-punk morsels along the lines of Teenage Head and The Undertones. Their *KING-SIZED SESSION EP* offers a sample of their wares for those just getting into the groove.

San Francisco's bastion of burlesque cheer, The Devilettes, teased and amused the world-weary crowd with red-fringed bodysuits and sequined devil horns to match. Their syncopated dance moves revisited drill team, but their classic garage rock pointed in another direction. The troupe of these hippy ladies shook their moneymakers as if Paula Abdul herself was choreographing Betty Page and Poison Ivy Rorschach clones in formation! They'll be appearing next at the Tease-A-Rama L.A. 2003 (the nation's largest convention of burlesque dancers) at the Henry Fonda Theatre in October.

Ladies and gentlemen, introducing The Checkers! L.A.'s own brought the noise à la early Blondie crossed with The Devil Dogs and bred on pure power pop-punk rock. Leader/chanteuse and photographer extraordi-



naire (responsible for The Donnas, Mr. T Experience, and a veritable who's who of indie punk album covers) Miss Julie "Vox" Pavlowski sang her heart out in that power pop-punk ingénue way that elicited the crowd to dance like court jesters on crack. The Checkers are rounded out by formidable musicians and local scene movers-and-shakers like Chris Barfield (the latest addition to infamous snack-rockers The Go-Nuts), GG King (of Radio Beat Records), and a drummer who pounds like the heart of rock 'n' roll is still beatin'. Los Angeles music-scene mainstay Jim Freek had the savvy to put The Checkers on the map with their album **MAKE YOUR MOVE** on his Teenacide Records imprint. They sold over 50 copies the first day of release at the popular-yet-fickle retail giant Amoeba Records in Hollywood. With so much love from the scene and such talent to back up whatever they have to offer the tired masses yearning for a quick pick-up from the drudgery of local hack/slop bands, The Checkers are ready to say, "King me!" Some of the highlights of their glorious set included such rocking ditties like "The Nerv", the poignant "Paper Crown", and a crowd-pleasing flashback to the '80s with a cover of "The Fanatic". They closed the night with a dead-on rendition of Blondie's "Dreaming", which brought frantic members of the crowd and The Devilettes back on to the stage. You can't even begin to imagine this kind of audience participation. It was like nothing seen since the heyday of The MC5. Are you ready for The Checkers? I bet you are.

## THE DISTILLERS THE BRONX

September 6, 2003 @ the Glasshouse (Pomona, CA)

The Distillers dropped by and brewed up a splendid mugful of intoxicating sonic froth. Supporting band The Bronx put on an energetic and fine performance, as well.

"I wonder if I can get an interview with Brody," I was thinking as I entered the backstage area. At that same moment, the woman herself was coming out of the doorway I was entering. Brody and I did that humorous back-and-forth dance, in which each person keeps trying to get out of the other's way but both mirror the other's movements. We both laughed, and I said, "Well, since I'm here, I am Marcus from SKRATCH MAGAZINE, and I was wondering if you would like to do a quick interview." "Yeah, sure!" was her reply, and I thought, "Wow! How cool is this?" But alas, it was not meant to be.

The Distillers have left Epitaph and have since signed on with media giant Warner Bros. Along with the increased distribution and boost in personal luxuries, the band now has at least one "minder." With fame comes more and more fans who incessantly get in the face of the talent. This is one of the reasons Warner Bros. employs someone to shoo people away from the band—and from Brody in particular. I must say that the man who kept shooing me away from her all evening was very polite and just doing his job.

It was kind of weird to have only two bands on the bill, but both made up for it by playing longer sets. First on tap was The Bronx. Despite the name, this unit is not from the East Coast, but from a tiny cholo town in

SoCal called Pico Rivera. Overall, The Bronx sounds a lot like Motorhead and GBH meet Suicidal Tendencies...sort of. (Founder/lead guitarist Joby says that ST is one of his major influences.) None of the band members are cholos, but vocalist Art sings and screams a lot like Mike Muir. This is not to imply he is a macho "tough guy"; on the contrary, he is a very personable young man...who could probably kick your ass. The Bronx wasted no time and exploded right into the set. Most of the spectators lining the stage barricade were simply guarding their precious positions for the headlining act. It took some time, but the majority of the throng eventually discovered the present moment and realized The Bronx was rocking NOW. Stunned and slightly bored faces transformed into smiles, nodding heads, and shouts of approval. Image? Fuck that. Here we had a band of T-shirt- and jeans-wearin' regular guys pumping out intense hardcore punkness. Songs we can all relate to included "Notice of Eviction" and "Stop the Bleeding". Just before the song "Bats", Art kindly explained, "Bats" is about bats." What a funny guy. Everyone in this four-man ensemble is a fine performer, but Art is a show in himself. He wraps himself in the mic chord, thrashes and stomps around, throws himself into the crowd, and often appears to be having a private and intense transcendental moment. It is no wonder that a major label (Warner Bros.?) began court-ing the band after only two performances. The intense and enjoyable set ended with Art throwing the microphone far into the crowd before stomping offstage. Check out [www.thebronxxx.com](http://www.thebronxxx.com).

Just before going on stage, all the members of The Distillers gathered together and proceeded to psych each other up for the performance. Brody, Tony, Ryan, and Andy all faced each other and whipped each other into the proper attitude with shared smiles and pats on the back while saying things like, "Fuck yeah!", "Let's do this!", "Right now!", etc. The "minder" once again shooed me away (I think I was breathing Brody's air), so I went out into the audience. Most of the material for this show was from the new album, **CORAL FANG**. The new songs display more diversity than previous releases while still retaining the antagonistic sound that defines The Distillers. Song names? I'm sorry, I could not decipher the words that emanated from Brody's sexy growl. I can tell you that the sold-out crowd at the Glasshouse lost its collective mind throughout the entire set. Newest member (former roadie and guitar tech) Tony fit in as if he had been a member since day one. The night was filled with driving buzzsaw guitar "fuck-you-core" delivered with the sweaty, spitting allure that only Brody can deliver. For those of you with genuine musical knowledge, Brody is one of the rare females who is an authentic contralto. Grrr! The new music is more creative than previous creations, with more tempo and key changes, music and vocals ranging from whispers to screams, and an overall greater sense of arrangement. The big hit, "City of Angels", was dedicated to everyone in attendance and was clearly the highlight of the performance. I could actually feel the energy in the air. Sadly, there was no encore, and the fans obediently exited quickly. Outside, about 50 people stood in the alleyway for over an hour until the band left the building. "EEEEEE! BROODDEEE!" came the screams of the die-hard fame-fixated fans. Some stood there with roses in hand, an offering to their chosen punk goddess. I watched from afar and thought, "Fame is weird".

## THURSDAY YEAR OF THE RABBIT TIME IN MALTA THE POP NARCOTIC

Sept. 10, 2003 @ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)

By Adam Hudson

I was really looking forward to the Thursday show because I have never had the chance to see them live. I heard lots of good things and was totally stoked to go. I got myself to the Glass House early to avoid a crowd, but found that there had been a line in front of the Pomona venue since 3 in the afternoon. (Most of you probably know that every show at the Glass House starts outside with the line that wraps itself around the building.) There were lots of skinny boys in black T-shirts with shaggy hair and skinny girls with home-made skirts. As the doors opened, everyone rushed in to get up front early and camp out there until Thursday began; but they had a few opening bands to sit through first.

The first band of the night was The Pop Narcotic. They opened up as the crowd was filing in, and they stole the show. They were in-fucking-credible. If you arrived at the show late, you missed the best band of the night. TPN are a five-piece barrage of sound fronted by lead singer Jim (you may recognize him from Thursday's "Cross out the Eyes" video), who screamed his vocals and tried his best to get the crowd into the set. TPN have their own sound and were really very entertaining to watch. Despite most of the crowd not knowing them beforehand, they got a good response from the kids and held their attention. I defiantly recommend checking them out, as The Pop Narcotic are outstanding.

Time in Malta was the next band to play, and I was not as impressed with them. I had seen them once before, so I knew what to expect, but unfortunately I didn't make it through the whole set. TIM isn't exactly hardcore—it's more like "hardcore?" (with a question mark). The lead singer didn't exactly scream his lyrics; it was more like he was yelling them in a high-pitched, gravelly voice. The music was good and had decent breakdowns, but I couldn't get past the singer's voice. Neither could most of the kids, I think, because most of them were outside smoking until TIM finished.

Year of the Rabbit was the one band playing I hadn't heard anything about, so I hung out at the back of the room while they got started. YOTR was lots of back-lighting and smoke machines, but not much else. Their set would have gone over really well were they playing the Wango Tango with some other KIIS-FM bands. They could be Goo Goo Dolls if they try real hard. I honestly don't see why they were on the bill at all. They had a big crowd watching, but I imagine most of the crowd was getting good spots for the headliner, because no one was moving aside from some YOTR fans up front. Again, I had to wait outside with the smokers until they finished.

Finally, Thursday was ready to play. I have not seen too



many bands take over a room like Thursday did that night. From start to finish they owned the Glass House. Every single person in the room was there for Thursday, and the band didn't disappoint. Geoff was all over the stage and frequently in the crowd to get help with the vocals from fans up front. They played a good mix of songs from their new album and old stuff from FULL COLLAPSE. What surprised me most was they played "Cross out the Eyes" and "Understanding in a Car Crash" fairly early in the set and finished up with the single from their new album, "For the Workforce, Drowning".

Overall, the combination of The Pop Narcotic and Thursday more than made up for the lack of entertainment in between their sets that was Time in Malta and Year of the Rabbit.

## **Happy Campers The Plus Ones Starpool The Stereo The Forces of Evil**

September 12, 2003 @ Chain Reaction  
(Anaheim, CA)  
By Ian Wilkins

Chain Reaction was packed, but everybody was under the age of 16, it seemed, except for their parents and me. An all-ages show means only one thing: no alcohol—which means that this review is from the eyes of a completely sober man. Of the five bands playing, I had heard only of The Stereo and Happy Campers, so I really wasn't sure what to expect from the other three bands.

Up to bat first was Happy Campers, three guys who come from Las Vegas. They opened the show with "Sixteen", and by the time they started their second song ("Make It on My Own"), they had the room filled with screaming new fans. During their set-up, I noticed that they spent forever getting the sound levels just perfect; so when they played they sounded just like their self-titled second CD. Usually with a three-piece band it can become a little boring, but these guys were fun to watch thanks to Isaac and his onstage antics between songs. Happy Campers are definitely worth leaving the blackjack table to go see. Hell, I will get out of my shower in Azusa to go see these guys.

The Plus Ones were up next. They really should have started the show. They were just short of alright and nothing really special. It seemed like it was the perfect time for everybody to go outside and grab a smoke or two, maybe three. I took this golden opportunity to get closer to the stage so I could make out what the lead singer was saying. The Plus Ones didn't really get any better (nor did they get much worse) for their whole half-hour set. This band could have been a lot better if they would stop watching MTV 2 and find their own style.

As soon as The Plus Ones were off the stage, everybody put out their smokes and filled the place with anticipation of the next band, Starpool. "Bad ass" is all I have to say. They are an eight-piece ska band, and they started the show with their horns blazing. They were a fun break from the previous band, and I regret I wasn't able to talk to these guys and at least get the

names of all the members. Halfway through the 45-minute set, they stopped the music and proceeded to get everybody clapping—and I do mean everybody. The lead singer even had the dreaded back row clapping. All it took was for him to jump off the stage, force his way to the back, and show some parents how to clap again. The only problem with their set was the fact that the stage was way too small for any of the members to move around and have a good time. The lead singer was dodging horns and guitars, but none of that seemed to matter to him, as he had a smile that was only outshined by his bald head under all the lights and sweat.

Up next were The Stereo. I have been looking forward to seeing them for a while now, so I was more than excited to finally get the chance. But The Stereo should probably go to Las Vegas and find work in a lounge. The music was dull, and the show reflected it. When the lead singer has to ask what is the matter with the half-filled room in the middle of a song, then it might be that your band probably shouldn't take it out belittling your audience. The music was alright, but with there being so many bands out there that sound exactly like this, at least drink a couple of Red Bulls and pretend you're having a decent time.

I can't say enough about this next ska band, The Forces of Evil. They were great. This band has seven members in it, and lead singer Aaron looks like he just left the new Pearl Jam tour to come sing with this group. The four horn players danced in unison while popping off some serious notes. Chain Reaction was once again packed, and there were two small ska pits going nuts in the middle of the room. I put my pen down right after the second song, because I already knew what I was going to write: fantastic, great, finally a reason to get out of bed again in the morning. They finished a 45-minute set, only to play a 15-minute encore, which the fans begged for. Hell yeah! Thank whomever is in charge of this cosmic universe for The Forces of Evil.

## **LAST TARGET THE DISASTERS THE UNSEEN DROPKICK MURPHYS**

September 13 @ Curly's (Tulsa, OK)  
By Brian Meredith

With a bill like this, you can't go wrong. Hot off the heels of this year's Warped Tour, Dropkick Murphys jumped headfirst into their first national tour in support of BLACKOUT. And as usual, they were sure to bring along good company.

Opening the show was Last Target. Those familiar with the sounds of Thug Murder will know what Last Target are about. From Tokyo, Last Target played a rousing set of energetic street punk. As they took the stage, I was anxious to see how the crowd would respond. While often hard to understand due to heavy Asian accents, the music was tight and was very well-received. Everyone from the skins to the punk kids were chanting along and pumping their fists as ex-Thug Murder vocalist Ryoko Naitoh uninhibitedly used the whole stage.

Giving the kids just long enough to catch their breath, Roger Miret and crew jumped in to knock the air right back out of them. It had been about a year since I had last seen The Disasters, and their relentless tour schedule of late has left them with a much tighter set. After touching on pretty much every song from their debut album, Roger won the crowd over with a cover of Agnostic Front's hardcore anthem "Gotta Go". There wasn't a soul that wasn't singing "From the East Coast to the West Coast...."

With the torch being passed on to Boston's The Unseen, the leather jackets and Mohawks found their way from the bar to the front row. Also fresh off Warped '03, it was refreshing to see the band off of the big stage and back into the familiar rowdy, sweaty, and (sometimes a little too) intimate club environment. The Unseen mixed it up with old and new, completely kicking everyone's ass before turning things over to the almighty Dropkicks.

As the lights dimmed and "The Foggy Dew" gradually got louder over the P.A., the size of the crowd seemed to instantly double. The infamous chant "Let's go Murphys" soon drowned out the P.A., and flags waved throughout the venue. "Boston" immediately washed over the crowd, followed by "Gonna Be a Blackout Tonight". The set continued with both Dropkick standards (such as "Barroom Hero" and "John Law"), as well as plenty of stuff from their newest release, BLACKOUT. In true DKM fashion, they finished of the night with "Skinhead On the MTBA". All of the skins in the house piled on stage, only to be followed by anyone else brave enough to hazard the frenzy. There wasn't a more fitting way to end a great night of such talented bands.

DKM, The Unseen, and The Disasters are all separately touring throughout October and November, so be sure to check their Websites for dates, and pick up a show.

[www.dropkickmurphys.com](http://www.dropkickmurphys.com)  
[www.thedisasters.com](http://www.thedisasters.com)  
[www.unseenpunks.com](http://www.unseenpunks.com)  
[www.punkfreak.com/lasttarget/index2.html](http://www.punkfreak.com/lasttarget/index2.html) (last target)

## **TAKE ACTION TOUR: AVENGED SEVENFOLD EIGHTEEN VISIONS FURTHER SEEMS FOREVER THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN POISON THE WELL**

September 19, 2003 @ the Electric Factory  
(Philadelphia, PA)  
By AC Lerok of Philadelphia

Let it be said that the Electric Factory is a pretty big venue, comparable in size to the Palace in Hollywood. It was a little strange seeing acts like Avenged Sevenfold and Dillinger in such a place, but I soon got over any misgivings. The night started off with an intense set by Orange County locals Avenged



Sevenfold. They kicked off at 7:30, so the crowd was still a little thin, but those in attendance got their money's worth. In the half-hour set (which was far too short), Averged brought out the arsenal, playing "Darkness Surrounding", "Desperate Through Reverence", and "Eternal Rest". The set was pretty reliant on the new release *WAKING THE FALLEN*, but they did satisfy the crowd with a couple of old favorites.

Eighteen Visions took the stage next, along with a life-sized sculpture of Humphrey Bogart draped with a Les Paul (for whatever reason). The set left a little to be desired. Despite the fact that more people were there, there was very little dancing. All in all, Eighteen Visions was a little disappointing.

Further Seems Forever, although a little out of place considering their bill-mates, definitely made up for the energy void left by Eighteen Visions. The emo vets took care of business with "How to Start a Fire", "The Sound", and "Insincerity as an Artform", to name a few. Further brought a great show, although, The Dillinger Escape Plan wiped clean memories of any other band on the bill with an explosive 40-minute set. Honestly, the only way to describe it is absolutely disgusting. With songs from both the *IRONY IS A DEAD SCENE* EP and *CALCULATING INFINITY*, Dillinger left a lasting impression on everyone in attendance. During the set, lead singer Greg Puciato jumped on top of one of the stage cabinets and started shaking the house cabs (which were hung dangerously by a chain in groups of eight). Security tried to get him to stop, but hey, he's in the band.

Poison the Well frontman Jeff Moreira also joined Dillinger onstage for the last two songs. Speaking of Poison the Well, their set was preceded by the message of the tour from its organizer, which basically consisted of: "Kids, don't commit suicide." That's good advice. When Poison the Well did get started, they didn't mess around. Getting straight to the point with songs from their new release *YOU COME BEFORE YOU*, They vied with Dillinger for best set of the night. Accompanying the set was the best dancing I have seen since my arrival in Philly. The entire floor became pit, which was impressive, given the size of the floor. The 40-minute set was over far too soon, and it took the encore-expecting crowd a little while to clear out.

All in all, the show in itself was pretty intense. I think those there with me would agree.

## HELLA TFT

September 19, 2003 @ the Knitting Factory—  
Main Space (New York, NY)  
By Davie Kaufmann

There's something incredibly endearing about Hella's lack of stage presence. They know not of the ways to work a crowd or what to talk about while tuning up. "This song is called..." and "Thanks for coming" are the only phrases in their banter stash. Not that there's anything wrong with that. In fact, it's a good thing that their energy is so focused. What better use for it than to create some of the most mind-blowing instrumental geek rock since, well, ever?

Drummer Zach Hill has built a cultish following around his lightning-fast chops. His single-stroke alone inspired audience members to dance, drop their jaws, or motion for their neighbor to procure them a diaper—and sometimes all three. Guitarist Spencer Seim played anything but second fiddle, however. Hunched over and often facing his sole bandmate, he approached furiously dissonant tunes like "1-800-Ghost-Dance" (as well as new, unreleased material) with technique so delicate and precise that had he been muted, he would have easily passed for a classical guitarist tooling around with a cool new electric axe.

Openers TFT played bouncy, continuously downstrumming numbers that were enough to tie a crowd over, but hardly enough to get most of them excited. Perhaps they would have been better off in another setting. Hella are just too damn hard of an act to precede. There's no room for a lullaby when you're ready for an ass-whipping. Sorry.

Hella don't put on a traditional rock show in any sense: two guys—neither of them a singer—both with an "aw, shucks" attitude. See them and more than anything else you'll feel like you're peering in on the practice you told your neighbor to "tune down a notch." Excuse me while I pray that someday the guys next door to me get this damn good.

## MIND DRIVER THE SILENCE THE DEAL THE SCARRED MEGABABE

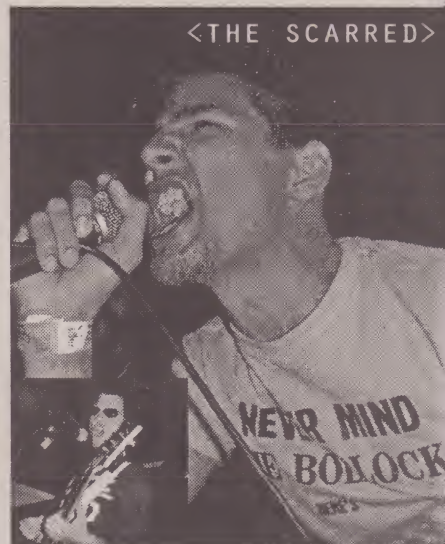
September 20, 2003 @ Chain Reaction  
(Anaheim, CA)  
By Luke Skywalker  
photos by Jon Woods



For this show, I actually arrived punctually, giving me time to catch the set of the first band, Megababe. I could hear a few of the songs from the parking lot, and I could tell the set would be a memorable experience. Entering the building, I was greeted by high-pitched punk rock straight from Japan. Megababe—a three-piece, all-girl punk band—was thoroughly exciting.

Playing songs such as "Bite Me", "Time Goes By", and "Make up My Mind", they also played crowd favorite "Speak Japanese or Die". The girls are talented musicians, especially bassist Ako. Guitarist/lead singer Miyu can also hold her own, and she allowed the crowd to hear her complete vocal range with every song. After every song, the crowd was thanked (in broken English) for rockin'. The girls finished their set, and the house lights came on, but Aki Nakabayashi, the band's producer and promotion manager, ran on stage and asked if we "want to hear one more song." Megababe returned to the stage and played their fantastic rendition of Metallica's "Fuel". I am very happy that these girls crossed the Pacific to play in California. If you want entertainment, see Megababe.

The Scarred (formerly known as The Discarded—same members as before) rocked the house like past performances I've seen with (as their Website says) "Punk Rock, done well, and done the old fashioned way, and not in the rip-off sense." Unfortunately, not much of the audience was familiar with original punk rock, so the crowd wasn't into it as much as some of the gutter punks there. The band opened with "Sabotage", played old favorites like "Follow This", and finished with "Grand Finale". I haven't seen them play such a good



set in a long time.

The Deal played next. I sat at the bar and watched. Normally I would pit with the rest of them, but I felt obligated to uphold my journalistic duties and take notes on the band. I wish I weren't so professional all the time, because The Deal was awesome—and so was the crowd. From the back of the room I was able to see my photographer friend John pass up taking pictures to make a couple rounds in the pit. It seemed as though The Deal may have changed their image, but their music is still the same. The guys covered both Minor Threat's "Screaming at a Wall" and Operation Ivy's "The Crowd", but also played their original songs "The Attack" and "Songs of Yesterday".

The Silence then played. The night would serve the purpose for a DVD of the band in the future. All attendees were required to acknowledge the filming and possible use of their image. I hope I didn't get taped. I waited around in front of the stage with the rest of the fans. Not familiar with The Silence, I was eager to hear their sound. I guess I wasn't really surprised to discover



er that they played popcore (that's right, I just coined a new classification of music). Decked out in black, the band dramatically took the stage with strobe lights and the sound of rain and thunder. Their set was all right, and their fans were mediocre. A few kids attempted hardcore dancing, while others stood around the circle. Most kids, pushed their way towards the front of the stage in hopes of touching the lead singer's sweaty

## <THE SILENCE>



flesh.

Finally, headliner Mind Driver came on. Having never seen them before, I was interested in seeing what they had going on. Like The Silence, Mind Driver played POPCORE. The only song I've ever heard by Mind Driver was a cover of Bad Religion's "Generator". They played a pretty decent set, which included "Walk", "Anywhere but Here", and "The Process". New to the line-up was guitarist Mark Yaeger, who was playing his first show. The crowd was getting kind of annoying, and I felt I'd had my fill, so I left early to get into bed by midnight.

I don't feel I sufficiently saw Mind Driver, so I might try to see them again; but I don't think I'll make an effort to see The Silence. I will tell you this: the next time The Deal, The Scarred, or Megababe is in town, I'll be there.

# THE EXPLOITED TOTAL CHAOS SPLIT DECISION

September 21st, 2003 @ the Galaxy Theatre (Santa Ana, CA)

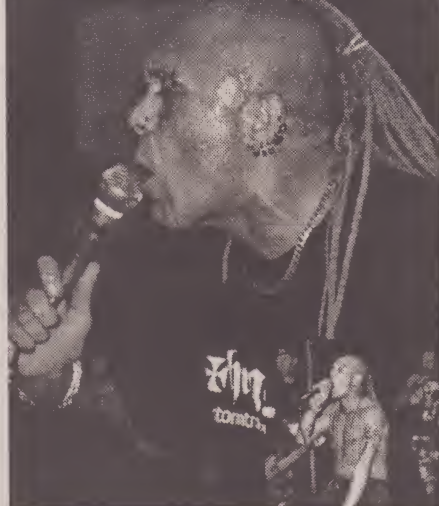
Text and Photos By John Woods

The big question is: what DIDN'T happen at this show? This was one crazy night of pure punk rock. As The Exploited put it nearly 23 years ago with their first studio album PUNK'S NOT DEAD, punk wasn't dead on this night. There was a glimpse of that spirit that broke free and spawned a fury on the stage and in the crowd.

After a long ordeal of trying to get into the show and not being on the guest list, the security guards around the side felt pity for us and snuck us in the back. (If you

happen to be reading this, thank you very much!) The first band up was a four-piece punk-rock band from Oxnard whose name I didn't catch. Their style reminded me of '80s punk, especially with the sloppy vocals

## <THE EXPLOITED>



and the stage presence coming of a singer who looked more like a gangster. It didn't seem as though most the crowd adored them too much, because heckling began quite quickly. Shouts and yells of "YOU SUCK!" and other choice words that were a bit more "descriptive" came from the mouths of many people. The drummer didn't take too kindly to these words and decided to use his microphone to have a friendly chat with the crowd. Meanwhile, the singer took notice and spit on a bunch of people in the front, then jumped the barricade and knocked some people around while going in the pit. They finished up their set and left the stage with a live-by goodbye from the drummer

## <SPLIT DECISION>

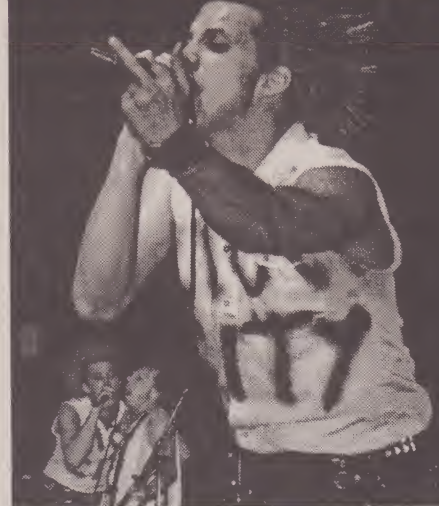


Split Decision took the stage next and started pumping out faster and more harmonic punk rock. These guys were pretty tight musically and got the crowd pumped up. They sort of reminded of some older Epitaph Records bands, with political tones and harder edges, yet still melodic punk. They were a good overall addition to the show.

Total Chaos was up next, in all their street-punk glory. They were very intense and in your face, both with their music and behavior. People were now finally starting to

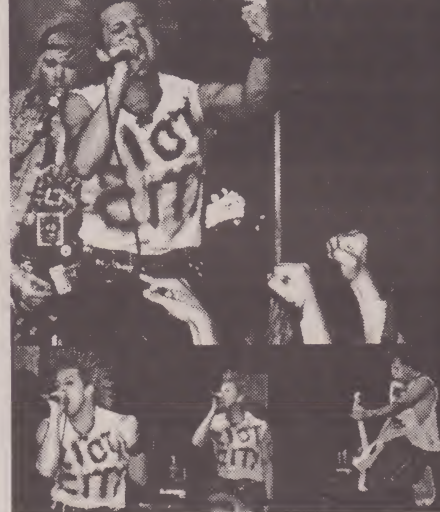
get energized. One thing that did get old was how they pretty much never stopped telling someone or something to "f###k off." However, it was priceless when the singer dedicated a song to the LAPD and told them (them being the LAPD) to "f###k off" while there were two cops very near the stage. I also have to give them credit for being around long enough to write a song about the first Gulf War and then being able to explain how pissed off they were that it's happening again 12 years later by another President Bush. Total Chaos scorched through the rest of their set, which included favorites such as "Riot City", "Unite to Fight", "Complete Control", and an awesome rendition of The Misfits' "Attitude". Near the end of their set, there was almost a fight in the pit, and shortly thereafter two girls started getting in each other's faces and throwing fists.

## <TOTAL CHAOS>



About an hour later (at least that's what it felt like), a crew of people finished setting up for The Exploited. Legendary frontman Wattie and the rest of The Exploited stormed the stage and immediately began churning out songs. Their attitude and sheer presence made the atmosphere intense. Whether it was the deep-throated screams, the pounding rhythms, or even Wattie's snarls, it all gave off the vibe of a true punk

## <TOTAL CHAOS>



show. One could tell that The Exploited has been around the musical block just by how crushing, heavy, and mind-blistering their music was. The downside to all this was when Nazi skinheads showed up and took



over the pit. Wattie lightened up the mood by making fun of them. At this point, The Exploited was mercilessly smashing out songs such as "Let's Start a War", "Dogs of War", and what seemed like part of "Exploited Barmy Army", among many, many others. All this was accomplished while slaughtering the eardrums of both young and old. I don't know what else to say about these guys. They put on an incredible show and have been doing so for over two decades.

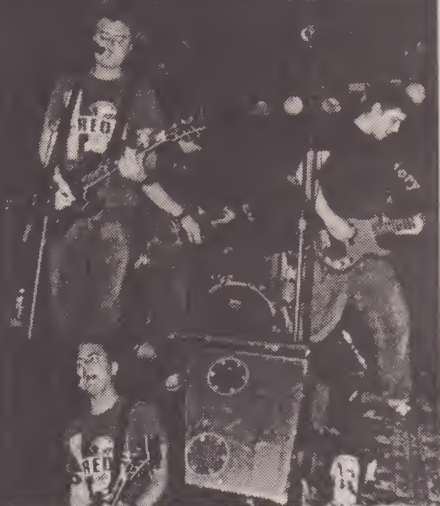
## AVAIL DARKEST HOUR JERICHO

September 26, 2003 @ the Knitting Factory (New York, NY)

Text and Photos By Janelle Jones

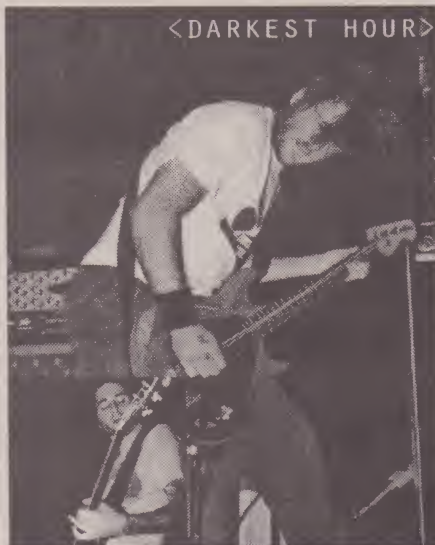
A great line-up of Virginia-based bands was on the menu at the Knitting Factory, that nice, sweaty, intimate club you can always count on for great shows (e.g., Subhumans, A Global Threat, The Queers, etc.). Plenty of disparate styles were featured on this night: hard yet catchy punk of Jericho, death metal/hardcore as fashioned by Darkest Hour, and Avail's blend (destruction?) of genres. As the night wore on, the venue only got more packed (and sweatier). This was the first stop on the bands' short stint on the East Coast, and if all the dates are as charged as this one, then plenty of people are in for a hell of a show.

### <JERICHO>



First up was Jericho (a Virginia import via Boston), on the road in support of their recently re-released EP on Iodine, *WORKER'S UNION*, which came out just days prior to this show. This four-piece simply plays plain good punk. Highlighted by great guitar work and strong, emotional vocals, it's obvious Avail is a big influence on these guys' sound. And although their set was teeming with hard rockers, the (unfortunately) sparse crowd just was not getting into it. The vocalist even had to beckon the crowd to move forward towards the stage. Some people who were in attendance, however, were members of The Casualties, including Rick and Meggers, supporting a band they've toured with in the past and seemingly like very much. Some songs we were treated to off the aforementioned EP included "Sunday Pints", "Running in Circles", "Oxygen", and "Fifty Cent Hearts", during which Rick pulled down a

mic off the stage in order to add his vocal stylings. I'm happy to say that as the set wore on, the crowd did start to enjoy themselves more—which is good, because these guys definitely put on an impressive set.



Next to take the stage was Darkest Hour, that sick death-metal five-piece who've been around for about eight years now and just keep getting better and better. This was the second time I saw them, and their set was just as feral as the first time (back in July). They tore into "The Sadist Nation", the first fiery offering from this year's *HIDDEN HANDS OF A SADIST NATION*—which I just CANNOT praise enough. Full of metal riffs, hardcore breakdowns, maniacal speed, and some of the most incendiary socio-political commentary to be found, this is a great record. And live, the hellish fury and anger can't be overlooked, as frontman John Henry growls lines like "One nation under the gun / Where forward thinking is shunned" and "The myth of protection is a sick fascination / A culture of violence is what you are feeding," making clear what he and his band mates think about the present state of affairs in this "holy plastic empire." Their new material is definitely their most thought-provoking to date, as exemplified in songs like "The Patriot Virus" and "Marching to the Killing Rhythm". Darkest Hour's set was brutal. John's delightfully harsh vocals enveloped in the dual-guitar onslaught of Kris Norris and Mike Schleibaum, all anchored by Paul Burnette's bass prowess and the sick

### <DARKEST HOUR>



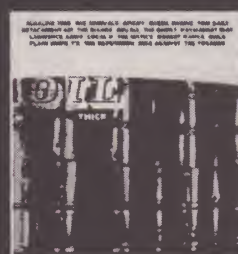
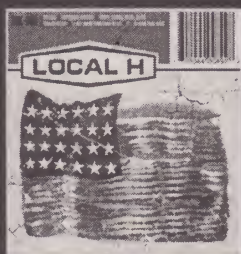
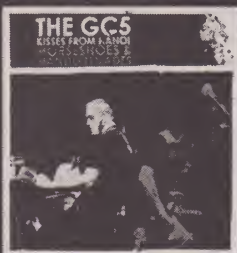
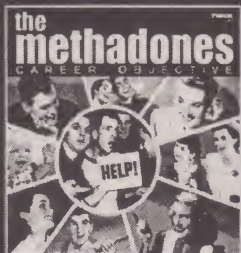
drumming of Ryan Parrish (referred to appropriately as an "octopus" by Jericho's frontman). Oh, that double-bass mayhem! And the sticker that read "Blame Canada" on his kit was a nice touch. While mentioning unimportant tidbits, John, in all his barefoot glory, must have relished the stage's lush carpeting. The band performed bludgeoning songs off their three LPs (2000's classic *THE MARK OF JUDAS* ("Eclipse", "Escape Artist"); *SO SEDATED, SO SECURE*; and the aforementioned *HIDDEN HANDS*). Rightly, the crowd (markedly larger for Darkest Hour) at least had a pit going throughout the set...albeit a shamefully small one. (Sidenote: I do believe someone in the audience handed the band some money. Not too long ago they lost a substantial amount of cash when their van was robbed.)

### <AVAIL>



Finally it was time for Avail, Richmond's pride and joy. At this point the place was packed and antsy in anticipation of the night's headliners. The energy was there, the band was spot on, the crowd loving every minute of it. Avail opened with the upbeat "Black and Red", the first track off their latest release, 2002's *FRONT PORCH STORIES* (their second for Fat Wreck Chords and sixth full-length overall). Other newer offerings included the true tour de force "Blue Times Two" and the powerful "The Falls". Avail didn't let up the entire set, playing a nice mix from their ever-growing catalogue that had the crowd singing along during the entire set. For the first time that evening, there was crowd-surfing in order to get up onstage and sing along with vocalist Tim Barry. All the while, Beau Beau, the band's insane "cheerleader" (comparable to The Mighty Mighty Bosstones' resident skanker Ben Carr) riled up everyone even more. The key word here is "energy." This band is unbelievable live. Chances are that even if you're not a fan or have never heard Avail's eclectic brand of hardcore punk tinged with a bit of the old Southern flavor, you would enjoy their live set.

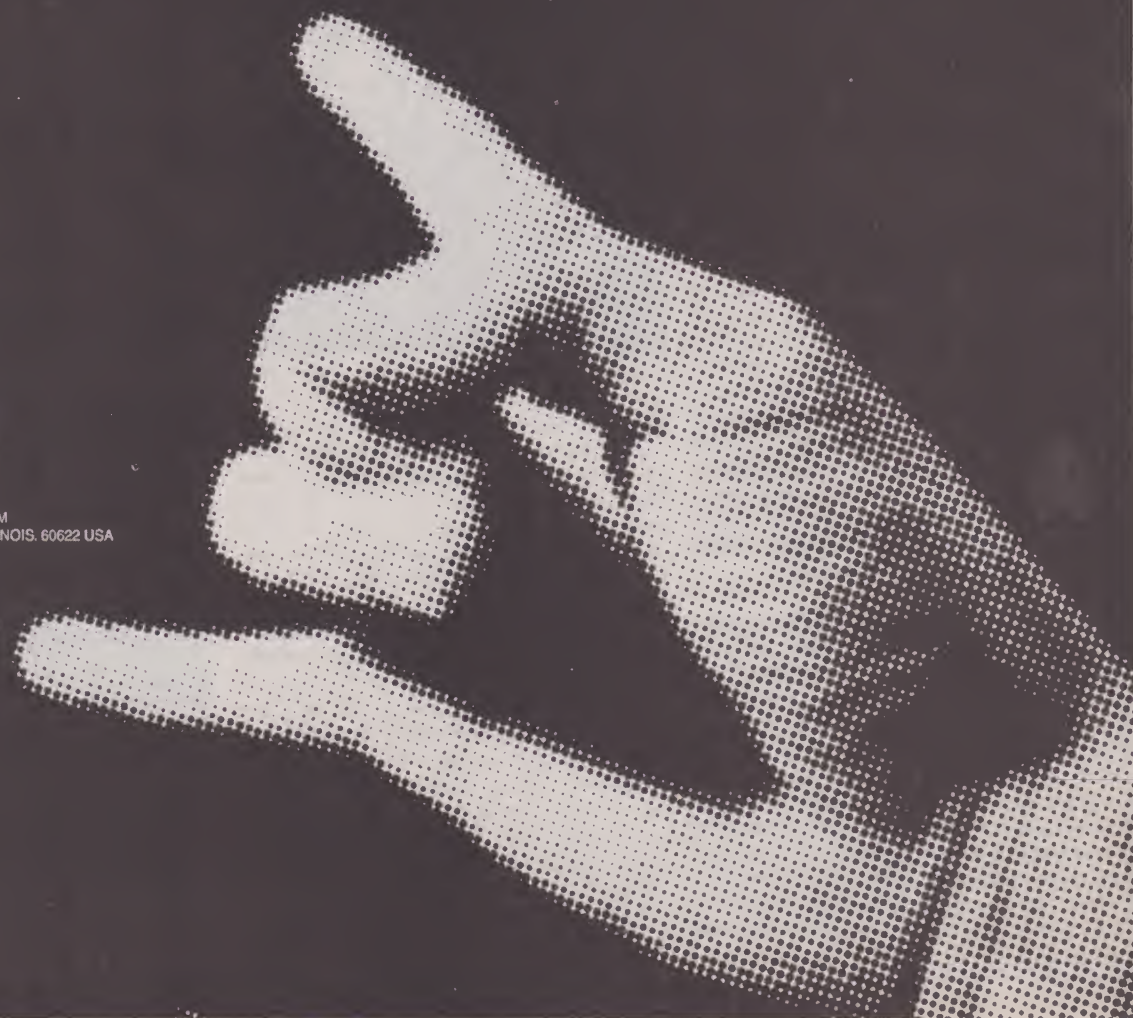




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# Q AND NOT U BLACK EYES ANTELOPE

September 30, 2003 @ 51 Buckingham (Pomona, CA)  
By Tiffany Chow

It is really amazing to me that a band or a certain type of music that is so far under the radar of the mainstream and the consciousness of the masses can still be so well-loved and almost worshipped. That is exactly the kind of show this was. The night was compiled of three major elements: three as-indie-as-it-comes bands, an overly artsy venue, and a large crowd of "scenesters." This scene tries so hard to stay under the radar, to stay unpredictable and non-stereotypical—and in doing so they become terribly prosaic. Ironic, isn't it?

Anyway, on with what is really important—not the fashion or the hair or the art, but the music! Antelope took the stage after a lot of set-up time and began to play the style of music we'd hear all throughout the night. Heavily influenced by the DC scene popularized by Fugazi and others, the sound of Antelope is characterized by vocals dripping with an attitude that sounds like condescension, sharp twangs of guitar, jazzy bass, and rapid drumming. They were really very similar to the headlining act for the night, Q and not U. The structure of the music was very monotonous, with no real chorus/verse set-up. They were interesting to watch, though. The guitarist liked to dance around like a robot, and the whole band took turns playing each other's instruments. They had that whole brilliant music theorists look about them that is so common in the indie/college radio scene.

By the time Black Eyes finally came on stage (as they took forever to set up, as well), the crowd had swelled to a pretty considerable size. I could tell that as many kids that had come out to see Q and not U, there was probably an equal or greater amount there to see Black Eyes. I was really unfamiliar with this band, but by the end of their set, I was blown away. They had two drummers (sometimes three), and a saxophone player who looked like Santa Claus on crack. They played a variation of chaotic, spazzy post-punk. At one point, there were two bassists playing. The vocals are even harder to characterize, as they were a flurry of indistinguishable squeals, screams, and yelps. In one of the songs, the guitarist (well, he was most of the time) played a snare drum and his guitar at the same time—with one drumstick. The crowd was SO into this band.

Q and not U! I was so excited. This is the band that epitomizes that whole amazing concept I talked about in the very first line of this review. They are so underground, but so loved there. They played their lovely DC-influenced indie rock, as kids danced and sang along. They livened up the set by breaking between some songs and talking passionately about their anti-Republican/anti-recall/anti-Bush sentiments. Having set up a voter registration table in the back, they strongly encouraged the crowd to sign up and vote against the impending recall. The singer declared his desire for us to vote to get "Arnold out of your neighborhood so we could get Bush the f\*\*k out of ours." Even though I am proudly Republican, I still love them. That's how fantastic they are!

I am glad the show had only three bands and ended early. As great as the music was, I don't think I could have handled any more of the fashion show the night was slowly turning into.

## THE PIETASTERS VOODOO GLOW SKULLS RIVER CITY REBELS

October 2, 2003 @ Knitting Factory (New York, NY)  
Text and Photos By Janelle Jones

Usually at any venue you go to, the opening act isn't that great of a draw. It's just the way it is. But this was certainly not the case this night at the Knitting Factory. Right from the get-go, things were definitely heating up inside when River City Rebels took the stage. Never



having heard these guys before but having heard MANY good things about them, I was interested in finding out what all the fuss was about. Well, from their opening number "Aborted" through their entire set, it was apparent that the Rebels are something special. The room was packed for these guys, with a circle pit forming almost instantaneously. And no wonder: the band's great sound (and fashion sense) that really hearkens back to the glory days of '77. With flashes of The Clash and The Dead Boys evident in their brand of streetpunk, this stuff would please anybody who enjoys energetic, gritty punk. What sets this tough band apart from other great streetpunk bands like Plan A Project and U.S. Bombs is the inclusion of a horn section, which gives the Rebels a ska vibe. Additionally, they seem to have a penchant for glam. Vocalist Dan O'Day (a.k.a. the Bopper), who has a confrontational stage presence, was even sporting a very fine New York Dolls T-shirt. Their set included a bunch of songs off their latest record, 2002's NO GOOD NO TIME NO PRIDE (their third on Victory), including "Drunken Angel", "No Good", and "Pass the Basket", the last being a number the frontman provocatively introduced by saying it's "a song about priests fucking little boys." Yeah, that's another plus: their material is drenched in social commentary.

Anyway, another highlight was "Small Town Pride" off 2001's PLAYIN' TO LIVE, LIVIN' TO PLAY. It was great to see so many people rushing the stage this early in the night, trying to share the mic with Dan.

With those telltale green glow skulls strewn about the stage atop amps, it could only mean one thing: Voodoo Glow Skulls, those purveyors of that maniacal ska/punk/hardcore sound, would be up next. And we knew it was go-time when vocalist Frank Casillas (in his ornate, tiger-like mask) and the rest of the crew broke into "Human Pinata" off 1998's BAND GEEK MAFIA. From the first note, the crowd went nuts, equaling the six-piece's intensity, as there was much skanking going on. VGS' set was full of both new and old material, and quite a few live staples like crowd-favorite "Insubordination" (the first track off their classic debut WHO IS, THIS IS?) and their psychotic rendition of "Charlie Brown" (from 1995's FIRME). And you knew it was time for "El Coo Coo!", that Spanish number, when Frank was spotted wielding his skull torch. No matter how many times you witness this, it never gets old. As always, VGS played every song at frenetic speed, with horns blaring, bass and drums pounding, shredding guitar riffs, and Frank's unique vocals cutting through the chaos. Some newer material included "Voodoo Anthem" (with its great sing-along chorus) and "One for the Road", both off 2002's STEADY AS SHE GOES, the band's Victory debut. VGS ended their fine set with "Band Geek Mafia", during which their roadie (I'm guessing) pranced around the stage decked out in the old green, bug-eyed mascot costume, pulling unsuspecting victims out of the crowd onto the stage.

With a bill featuring three bands that could headline any show, that distinct honor went to The Pietasters, a band that although being quite energetic and upbeat, is much mellower than their predecessors on this night. Still promoting 1992-1996, a three-CD set that chronicles the band's earliest material (it includes their first four albums, along with plenty of rare and unreleased tracks) on VMS, they began their set with an oldie, "Dollar Bill", off their s/t debut LP (affectionately referred to as PIESTOMP). Classics were the order of



the night, with the band cranking out tunes like "Without You", "Biblical Sense", the riotous punk-tinged "Freak Show", the good-time romp "Maggie Mae", and "Girl Take It Easy" (the last four all from their

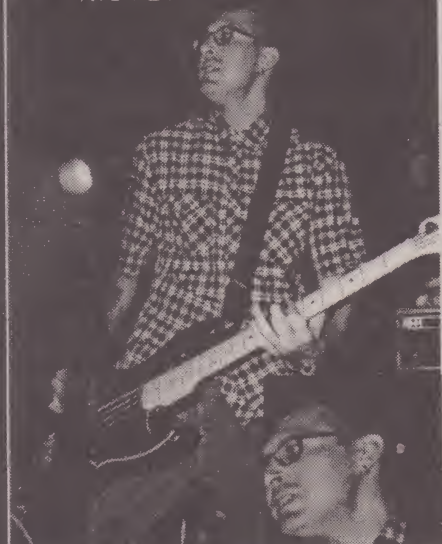


<VOODOO GLOW SKULLS>



1995 masterpiece OOLLOO). However, they also played some new stuff from their most recent (and soulful) record, **TURBO**, including "Rachel", the quirky "Malmo", and the reggae-infused "Drunken Master". Now, if you're familiar with that last song, you're aware that midway through Selah does some toasting with the guys. Well, on this night, there was no Selah, but rather

<RIVER CITY REBELS>



a random kid who made his way on stage, dancing like crazy, took the mic...and, to tell the truth, wasn't too bad. He definitely gained the crowd's respect—and from the playful grins on some of The Pietasters' faces, the band's, as well. And what Pietasters show would be complete without the booze? Unfortunately, this time around keyboardist Erick Morgan didn't pass around shots to the other guys in the band, but instead, at mid-set one of the "barmaid beauties" brought up some Bud for them. In any case, they played a long set and returned for an encore, which included a couple of covers: Bad Habits' "Night Owl" (for the older folks) and Oi! gods The Business' "Drinking and Driving". Seriously, it's not a Pietasters show if they don't bust out that little gem. The final song was the (somewhat) instrumental "Factory Concerto" (off their debut). Infectious and spirited, it was a great closer.

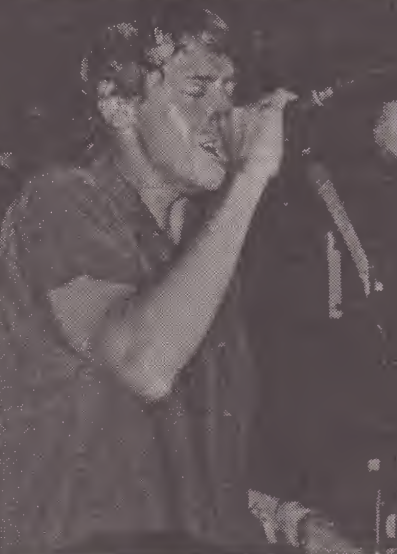
carolina, copeland, a storybook ending, and hey mercedes photos were taken by heathe jagger at chain reaction



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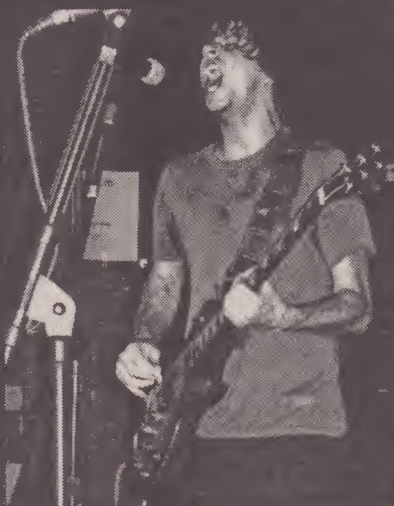
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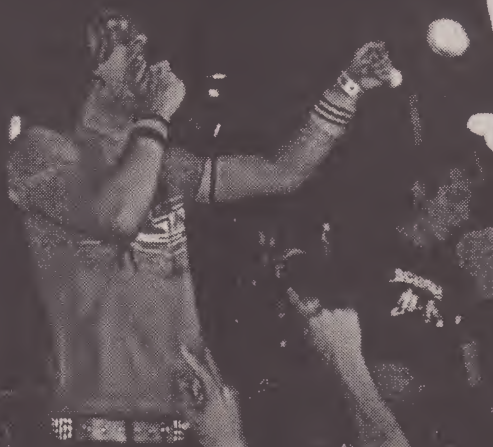
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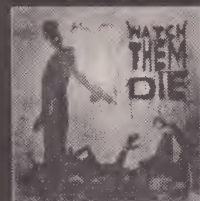
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## this is what some people had to say, ok?



### 7 ANGELS 7 PLAGUES UNTIL THE DAY BREATHES AND THE SHADOWS FLEE UPRISING

Blowing through the Midwest hardcore scene, 7 Angels 7 Plagues threw everyone for a loop when they announced their unexpected dissolution of the band. This record will show you what everyone was so up in arms about. More than just conventional hardcore, 7A7P has been turning heads since their Uprising debut JHAZMYNE'S LULLABY, and they continue to do so on this new release. Frontman Temo Rios throws out some pretty sick and disgusting vocals, backed up by surprisingly-melodic yet heavy guitars. I was blown away by the breakdown of "Sweet Princess Thief". As the guitars came down, so did some pretty impressive picking. The instrumental title track brought things down a notch, but it was also worthy of note. Those looking for something to dance to will be satisfied, but not impressed. I really dug "Sweet Princess Thief" and "A Farewell to a Perfect Score". If I had one gripe, the lyrics in a couple songs tend to be a little clichéd, but otherwise, I have no complaints. Go buy this record, and do it now.

-Andrew Wietstock



### 93 MILLION MILES S/T REVELATION

93 Million Miles from the Sun is part of the long history of The Refused, being comprised of Dennis Lyxzen, Jon Brannstrom, and Jonas Enkson (along with SaidiWas' Anders Johansson). Somewhat emo and somewhat hardcore in nature, the four-piece band's five-song, partially-live, self-titled EP is made up of songs you won't find anywhere else. For fans of T(I)NC, SaidiWas, and (obviously) The Refused, 93 Million Miles from the Sun's new release is an absolute must.

-Chelsea Hassler



### ALCHEMIST AUSTRAL ALIEN RELAPSE

Australia isn't a place you think of when you think metal or groundbreaking music, but Alchemist is about to change all of that. This veteran metal outfit has found a home for its psychedelically-supercharged metal onslaught with Relapse. This 11-track release is a prime example of a band whose creative process and experimental nature is always in high gear. Spacious riffs run circles in your head and the bottom end crushes your skull, all while the undercurrent of melody washes over your conscious like the tide. While some may liken this band to Voivod meets Monster Magnet or even a mix of Queensryche and Dream Theater, but the undeniable truth is that Alchemist will expand your musical horizon if you take the proper time to absorb AUSTRAL ALIEN in full. [www.relapse.com](http://www.relapse.com)

-Mike SOS



### ALIGN BLUE BOOK VALUE BWR RECORDS

Align sounds like Faith No More meets Soundgarden: good, solid hard rock with an artful flair. My favorite songs on BLUE BOOK VALUE are disc opener "Lost on the 10", "Two Days to Long", and "Caught Looking". Align isn't the most original band, but there is a lot of heart on BLUE BOOK VALUE.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### AMAZING DEVICE THE QUIET ROOM TRIBUNAL

With their melodic honesty and catchy riffs, Amazing Device is sure to make waves in today's post-hardcore scene. THE QUIET ROOM is the first full-length from this NYC-based quartet, whose demos created a fan base that spans the entire East Coast. Aaron Wilson's vocals are reminiscent of Daryl Palumbo's (Glassjaw), but Amazing Device manages to create an original sound that is hard to forget. Emocore fans will gravitate to "Air", "Calamine", and "Discreet", while hardcore fans will lean more towards "My Saving Grace" and "Secret".

THE QUIET ROOM has something for everyone, and it is NOT to be missed.

-Chelsea Hassler



### AN ALBATROSS WE ARE THE LAZER VIKING ACE FU RECORDS

An Albatross is my new favorite band. WE ARE THE LAZER VIKING contains carnival madness with hardcore performance. This is the most original disc that I have heard in years. An Albatross is one-half arthouse and one-half bally hardcore punk. With song titles such as "The Manifesto of Divine Children", "Get Faster, Cry for Happy", and "The Revolutionary Politics of Dance", you can guarantee that this disc is ready to blow the boundaries of what is considered hardcore off the map. WE ARE THE LAZER VIKING must be heard to understand—and even then, good luck. The greatness of An Albatross and their music cannot be exaggerated. WE ARE THE LAZER VIKING is the new standard.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### ANIMOSITY SHUT IT DOWN TRIBUNAL

For some reason, I started listening to this album with a negative attitude; but when I heard the first song, "Grey Skies", my whole perspective changed. The song has complex rhythm patterns, original riffs, AMAZING drumming, and a very tight sound. Very remarkable for kids who were only 15 and 16 years old when they recorded the album. The album features brilliant rhythms and structures. It might be something in the water up in the Bay Area, a place that also brought us Testament, Exodus, and Vio-lence. Although the vocals contain some interesting growls, they also become boring at times, with foolish lyrics. However, I wouldn't be surprised to see some groundbreaking releases from these kids in the future, because it's obvious that they have the talent and the drive to make something of themselves. Seven out of 10.

-SupZac



### ARCH ENEMY ANTHEMS OF REBELLION CENTURY MEDIA

The prominent Swedish metal band Arch Enemy is back with their fifth studio album, their best to date. ANTHEMS OF REBELLION combines the fantastic guitar work of the Amott brothers that was apparent on '98s STIGMATA with the stimulating vocals of Angela Gossow. From this mix we get some of the most intense melodic metal around today. "Silent Wars" gets right to the point with heavy riffs and kick-ass double-bass work. Many of the songs on the CD have an anthemic sound to them, setting a positive mood and encouraging you to start a revolution of your own. The standout tracks are "Silent Wars", "We Will Rise", and "End of the Line". If you're down with Gothenburg, be sure to pick up this record, a nine out of 10.

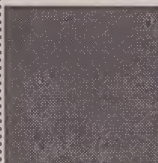
-SupZac



### ARTIMUS PYLEDRIVER ARTIMUS PYLEDRIVER WWW.ARTIMUSPYLEDRIVER.COM

Artimus Pyledriver is jamming the beer-drinking, hell-raising, high-octane red-neck rock in the tradition of Mountain and modern rippers Bad Wizard. I like this disc. With song titles like "Swamp Devil", "Dirt Road White Girl", and "Shaggin' Ass", you can see that Artimus Pyledriver arrives with their attitude blazing. The guitar work is very big-sounding and impressive. The band is tight. The vocals are raw. I turned this up until the police came by and wanted to know who in the hell that band was.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### ASTERISK\* DOGMA THREE ONE G

This Swedish band is in the grindcore style. The group has two levels of vocals: Cookie Monster and shrill demon shriek. This is a retrospective CD compiling every Asterisk\* track previously released. That is, DOGMA is the DOGMA I: DEATH OF A DROMOLOGIST LP, material from its split EP with Jenny Piccolo, as well as the split 7" with Nasum and assorted compilation tracks. DOGMA is 20 tracks of the band's progressive grindcore. What makes them progressive is the group makes sudden and agile leaps from the wall of sound grindcore formula into unexpected instrumental breaks and changes of mood and timbre. "Furniture" is exemplary of this, with its interludes of bass licks and angular guitar riffs.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### AUGUST PREMIER FIREWORKS AND ALCOHOL FUELED BY RAMEN

I listened to August Premier a couple times just to get an expert opinion. I've concluded that these guys still need some work. "In Loving Memory" sounds pretty cool, but the chorus is a bit whiny. Some of the songs have gratuitous cursing, which I think shows a lack of effort and ability to creatively express yourself musically. The last song on the album, "Dear Chicago", a prideful ballad to their hometown, brought a smirk to my stern face.

-Luke Skywalker



### AVENGED SEVENFOLD WAKING THE FALLEN HOPELESS RECORDS

I was pretty emotional when I got this record. The sight of a new Avenged release brought a tear to my eye. Okay, so I wasn't that excited, but it was pretty cool. I really dig this new record. Somewhat of a departure from previous Avenged recordings, this LP has everything. The opening song, "Eternal Rest", begins with an outright metal riff before crashing into one of the best breakdowns I have heard in a while. It's quickly followed by an awesome melodic section (including organ). This record probably will appeal to fans of Avenged's SOUNDING THE SEVENTH TRUMPET, as it's an offshoot of that record—but expanded to the max. Avenged move seamlessly between the heavy and the harmonious, really making for an interesting contrast. It's definitely worth checking out.

-AC Lerok of Philadelphia



### A WEEK IN JULY NEAR FATAL EXPLOSION ORANGE PEAL RECORDS

When I popped this album in my computer and began listening, I kept anticipating that the next chorus would include a couple of hardcore screams; but that never occurred. This did not deter me, though, because A Week in July has a pretty good sound, including good singing. I especially like "Collide" and its subtle female back-up vocals. I personally think every band should have at least one song with female vocals included. Good job, Molly. In "Won't Erase" I finally got the screaming vocals—but distorted? What up with that? I'd check this band out in concert.

-Luke Skywalker



### BELOVED (US) FAILURE ON SOLID STATE

Whenever Beloved or this album gets brought up in conversation, all I hear are statements like "Why are they so good?" and "Dude, so amazing." I could not say it better. This is a band that has set itself apart in the hardcore scene without even trying. Flawlessly blending metal, hardcore, and melody into an album that declares perseverance and pushing past failure, Beloved is a breath of fresh air to an increasingly stale hardcore scene. From the first hook in "Failure On My Lips" to the last note of "Insult to Injury", this album is pure genius. You have got to love it. [www.belovedrock.com](http://www.belovedrock.com)

-tChow



### BENEATH THE ASHES NAILED TO YOUR RUINS STATE OF GRACE

Every genre of music has its leaders and followers. Unfortunately, Beneath the Ashes are the latter. They've got it all: melodramatic song titles (with gems such as "Thank Heavens When Someone Is Crazy Enough to Give Me a Daisy" and "Look In Their Eyes Mom, You'll See Me"), double-bass drums, breakdowns, and guttural, screeching vocals. Too bad all the things they took from great hardcore bands only add up to one thing: generic drivel.

-Chris Guerra



### BEST OF SEVEN BEST OF SEVEN FASTLANE RECORDS

Opening track "Suffer Me" frightened me, with the lead singer of Best of Seven telling me about sexual encounters "with the lights down." It kind of creeps me out, but maybe that was just the first track. I thoroughly enjoyed the faster "Untrue", which included a wicked awesome studio echo effect. Described in their press release as "reminiscent to Bon Jovi and the Goo Goo Dolls," I could hear the resemblance, but from looking at the band's group photo, you, sir, are no Bon Jovi! I find it ironic that Best of Seven has a song "On the Radio" about a band moving out to Hollywood to get their song on the radio. They definitely have the rhyming skills that will produce a hit "on the radio," but, unfortunately, repeatedly singing "on the radio" doesn't cut it.

-Luke Skywalker



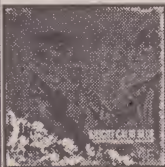
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NO ONE CONQUERS WHO DOESN'T FIGHT  
SPOOK CITY

While not that developed and eschewing shrill guitar leads, the music of Blood In/Blood Out recalls late-'80s Slayer. The band's metal-tinged hardcore should appeal to the same crowd of hardcore and metal fans that still hum "South of Heaven". Still, the production is a little weak and muddy, which would make it no surprise to hear any one of the Laporte County, IN, band's legion of local fans remark that the CD is good, but "you gotta hear them live."

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



**BRIGHT CALM BLUE**  
A DIRECT APPROACH FOR CASUAL CONVERSATION  
LEVEL PLANE

This Lincoln, NE, quartet has one of the best names in music. Unfortunately, the band's frantic, abrasive music is anything but bright, calm, or blue. Imagine a screamo band that thinks they can do poetry and then segue into late-'70s pop riffs. The band's song titles tell the story well: "Salt and Black Water", "Static", "Swallow Feathers Whole", "Rare as Radium", etc. Basically, the band sings about a whole bunch of stuff that you wouldn't want around your house in a style that you wouldn't want around your stereo. This would be a good album for a hypertensive individual on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Other than that, it's kind of like a cheese grater for your ears. [www.level-plane.com](http://www.level-plane.com)

-DUG



**BROADZILLA**  
LADY LUCK  
DIAMOND STAR RECORDS

The three women who make up Broadzilla were obviously born to rock. The band's cover of the old Motown hit "Love Child" is so relentless, in fact, it's scary. Harder than The Donnas and more fun than L7, Broadzilla may be the toughest girl group (with commercial potential) since The Runaways.

-Stephen B. Armstrong



**BROKEN BOTTLES**  
NOT PRETTY  
FINGER RECORDS

Orange County has done it again. Broken Bottles (featuring Jes "the mess" on guitar and lead vocals) is rocking some thick-toned, bad-ass, cool punk rock with balls. This band needs to run and secure Kelly Osbourne for a video for track #2 (a sure fire hit), "Kelly Osbourne". And that tune is not nearly my favorite song on NOT PRETTY. This disc is filled to the brim with good songs. Two of my favorite tracks are "Not Pretty" (the opener) and "I Want Problems" (the closer). Broken Bottles is the real punk package.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**BUCKRA**  
SO MANY WEAPONS  
DETONATION LABORATORIES

Buckra are four middle-aged, working-class, pudgy goons from Cincinnati who sound like a hokey attempt at being Primus or Guns N' Roses, stuck in that dinosaur-rock mentality that you need to be a sexist jerk to be in a famous band. It seems like they would feel totally comfortable playing in a strip club. Bring on the wet T-shirt contest—we have the soundtrack. It's no surprise this is a favorite bar band, I suppose (they are even a Cincinnati Budweiser True Music Selected Band). I hate bands like this. I have no respect for them. I spit on them.

-chad



**BUILT UPON FRUSTRATION**  
RESURRECTED  
DA'CORE

My brain just tried to burrow into my spinal cord. It's afraid that music these days just might not be all it's cracked up to be. If you wanted to prove that point, you could just jam (don't worry about touching the bottom of the CD (I say "jam" for a reason)) this album into the nearest CD player. Why does everybody seem to want to be Madball? Although Madball is great, what the hell is the appeal of pretending to be a band that has already made the technique amazing? This is a knock-off. Smash it.

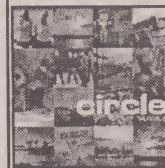
-Franny



**CALICO SYSTEM**  
THE DUPLICATED MEMORY  
EULOGY RECORDINGS

Typical screamo, with clanging guitars and Thursday-like vocals. Typical...but good. Calico System isn't terribly original, but they're quite an excellent band. Tracks like "Room with a View" and "Girl Named Vegas" make this an altogether good album.

-Chris Guerra



**CIRCLE VAUDVILLE**  
REFLECTIONS

Yum. Angry hardcore punk from the Netherlands. I always wonder about bands from the Netherlands: if they're from the Netherlands, why are all the songs in English? Except for that question, I can't find anything wrong with this album. It's angry enough, it's hard enough.... Circle reminds me of a Norse Thrice...maybe with a little new-rock styling thrown in—reminiscent of The Vines or The Hives or any of the other "the" bands. Circle is good, but not super-awesome good. Pick it up if you're interested in anything I just said.

-Franny



**CIRCLE II CIRCLE**  
WATCHING IN SILENCE  
AFM

Circle to Circle's debut release is as metal as it gets, thanks mainly to the writing team of vocalist Zak Stevens (ex-Savatage) and Savatage main men Jon Oliva and Cris Cafery. As a result, the metallic, majestic spirit of Savatage emanates from WATCHING IN SILENCE. Almost written like a score to a Broadway play, Circle to Circle's anthemic foray into the metal realm gives us some fancy fretwork, a slew of operatic chest-thumping, and an appreciative nod to bands such as Queensryche and Nevermore. While this quintet's semi-progressive metal is not in the same league as Dream Theater, it finds a niche somewhere within the legacy of Savatage and old-school metal like Judas Priest. [www.afm-records.com](http://www.afm-records.com)

-Mike SOS

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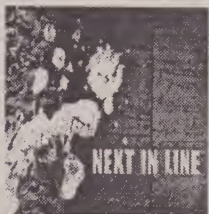
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### Forgotten Arrival

"Through Your Eyes" Out September 30th  
Check them out at [www.mp3.com/forgotten\\_arrival](http://www.mp3.com/forgotten_arrival)

With first listen you're probably assuming that this band is some incarnation of pop punk that existed years ago, but listen further and you'll realize that you have stumbled on something fresh and unique. Part melodic punk, part screamo, and part rock n' roll and yet entirely Forgotten Arrival. This band is young yet they share more musical influence than the majority of bands their age. From the energetic and intense track "Alone" to the catchy, sing-a-long chorus of "Take Him Home" to the standout melodic track "Unveil" you'll soon be caught up in this album's addictive melodies and unrelenting harmonies.



### Next In Line

"Traffic" Out October 28th  
Check them out at [www.mp3.com/nextline](http://www.mp3.com/nextline)

"Remember when punk albums that were full of big melodies and fat production that was top of the line? I'm not talking about the indie pop-punk and garage sounding punk releases that have come by the dozen. I'm talking about radio friendly and catchy rock with an unmistakable punk influence and indie spirit. A band with obvious talent to which good production can only amplify the sound, not mask it. Well Next In Line is just that band with an enormous amount of talent and hooks most bands wouldn't know how to compose. With almost 7 years experience this band knows how to lay down a perfect rock album for today's hungry crowd."



### Dismissed

"Taking the Good with the Bad" Available Now  
Check them out at [www.mp3.com/dismissed\\_punk](http://www.mp3.com/dismissed_punk)

"Taking the Good with the Bad" bridges the divide between punk, emo, and hardcore songs by blending those styles together with a thick strain of melody. Once for once, this release separates the San Diego area band from so much of the stagnate and overpopulated emo-rock scene. Waiting guitar solos, metal bridges, and the power of front man Dave Arthur's vocals brings energetic freshness to the band Dismissed.

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Check out [www.allages.com](http://www.allages.com) for more info.

## this is what some people had to say, ok?



### CLEARING AUTUMN SKIES PULSES & MATTER STATE OF GRACE

This band serves up a brutal blend of Cro-Mags-style hardcore with punishing metal. Its ostentatious desire to fill each bar of music with the greatest impact proliferates the number of dramatic pauses to the point which the songs seem to jerk forward incrementally. The mix of vocals leaves the backing vocals too far in the background on "Squares", but this is not the case on the rest of the four-song EP. This is a Bay Area band that should be able to make inroads with hardcore and metal audiences.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### COBRA HIGH SUNSET IN THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE COLD CRUSH RECORDS

The oldest member of this band is 23, which means that either they were the most preternaturally discriminating kindergartners in the world, or they spent their formative years insulated from the death throes of radio-friendly all-rock, pumping the best of the previous decade's music into their fertile imaginations. Some of these tracks mine the post-punk/goth vein that has proved so rewarding (both artistically and financially) for Interpol lately; some ("Awesomeology", for instance) not only trade on the language of the era but sound like a welcome

smooching-together of new wave and late-period prog (think "Owner of a Lonely Heart") at about 200 beats per minute. Somehow, the period beats and keyboard tones that sound contrived on many other throwback releases sound not only at home but positively necessary here.

-Brett McCallon



### COLPORTER SOVEREIGN MIND SELF-RELEASED CD

Colporter is a metal trio whose female-fronted assault can be likened to bands like Kittie, Drain STH, and Otep. On this 12-track offering, Colporter involves itself with heavy guitars and pounding bass lines that would make Korn proud. When topped off with an iridescent female voice, it gives off a Gothic vibe. Even though the outfit has a penchant for pulverizing, there's a strong melodic sensibility—especially in the hooks of the songs—that gives SOVEREIGN MIND a well-rounded vibe with the twist needed to stand out in today's musical climate.

[www.colporter.com](http://www.colporter.com)

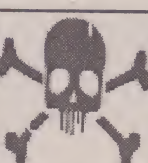
-Mike SOS



### COUNTDOWN TO LIFE TRAGEDY IS SO IRRESISTIBLE STATE OF GRACE

Just listening to the screaming vocalist on the debut album from Oregon's Countdown to Life leaves me hoarse. The band's sore-throat-inducing approach to hardcore relies on drumming and guitar styles taken from hard rock and heavy metal. Then, just when you think you have the group in your sights, it suddenly breaks left with "Better Off Dead". This song weaves in an indie-rock song like something off Kung Fu Records, contrasting the clearly-enunciated lyrics of that approach to the audio assault more prevalent on the album.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### CRESTFALLEN CRESTFALLEN ROBOTIC EMPIRE

Crestfallen's blast beats were so fast in the opening track "Backlashed" that I actually thought that the CD was skipping. The whole CD follows in the same vein: rushed, chaotic guitars and insane drumming. The vocals were a little too "black-metal" for me, but I still had fun with the EP. There are also two hidden tracks: covers of The Cramps' "Human Fly" and Minor Threat's "Minor Threat". The Cramps cover in particular was a weird choice, but it works.

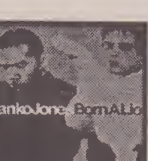
-Chris Guerra



### DAKOTA/DAKOTA SHOOT IN THE DARK ARMS REACH RECORDINGS

The debut full-length release from this Chicago prog-rock trio is an experiment in experimentation. The 10 instrumental tracks elicit comparison to legends like Yes, yet are sadly lacking in the emotional punch that an instrumental band needs to put it over the top. The music is technically interesting, but with no lyrics to round out the tunes, a band needs to be as good as Jeff Beck to pull this type of album off. 15 minutes into the album the listener has already forgotten most of what they've heard. There are some great titles to the tracks, such as "Don't Pee in My Bed and Tell Me It's Raining" and "No Matter How Hard I Try...I Never Remember the Alamo", but without lyrics there is no direct association between title and song. This would play well as ambient background music to a mellow party, but until this trio writes catchier tunes or starts singing, this will remain background music. [www.dakotadakota.com](http://www.dakotadakota.com)

-DUG



### DANKO JONES BORN A LION SIMBA RECORDINGS

This band is already popular in Europe and Canada, and finally someone in the U.S. has decided to distribute this album domestically. Thank you, revelation Records, for bringing us the sounds of Danko Jones. So, what kind of music does Danko Jones play? Well, it's hard-hitting rock music with a dash of Delta blues for good measures. It's amazing how powerful this three-piece sounds. Through catchy head-bobbing rock songs, Danko and company offer up love

advice and other commentaries on life. I'm not sure if this is necessarily a feel-good album, but it's a very good album. It's an album that you can't listen to in the background and go about your day; ABOUT A LION demands attention. With how good this album is, I see Danko Jones getting a lot of attention domestically soon.

-Dane Jackson



### DASHBOARD CONFESSIOAL A MARK, A MISSION, A BRAND, A SCAR. VAGRANT

We all loved Chris Carabba at one time, as much as we like to deny it now. This album might be the ticket to reclaim your affection. The new album strays a bit from traditional Dashboard Confessional-ism, but it's impressive in its own right. Now featuring a full band, the songs lack that acoustic-only charm but gain a new energy and fuller sound. Check out such gems as "As Lovers Go" and "Hey, Girl"; and if you cannot do without your traditional Carabba whine, check out "Give Up the Ghost". The album also includes Carabba's traditional

redo of a previous song: a new version of "Hands Down" (which is also the album's first single). This is the CD you hate to love. [www.dashboardconfessional.com](http://www.dashboardconfessional.com)

-iChow

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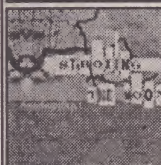
## I'm so tired of the generic shite out lately.



### DAVE BROCKIE EXPERIENCE SONGS FOR THE WRONG METAL BLADE

Aptly titled and utterly sophomoric, GWAR pulls a Slipknot and strips down sans costumes for Dave Brockie Experience, a cross between Jimi Hendrix and Spinal Tap. This 17-track release is good for a few laughs, a couple of gross-out moments, and a few riffs here and there—and probably is essential for GWAR fans; but otherwise, file in the novelty bin. [www.metalblade.com](http://www.metalblade.com)

-Mike SOS



### DEADWEIGHT STROKING THE MOON ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES

STROKING THE MOON by San Francisco's Deadweight is a masterpiece. That's right: a masterpiece. I have not been this knocked out since I first heard NOTHING SHOCKING by Jane's Addiction. STROKING THE MOON is artistically progressive while maintaining the soulfulness and hardness of rock. Reminding me of the Pretty Things' classic album SF SORROW (only better), Deadweight has a classic hard-rock sensibility guiding modern crunch. Go buy Deadweight's STROKING THE MOON now, immediately. This is it.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### DERITA SISTERS 77 BACK TO NO FUTURE KOTUMBA RECORDS

For their 19th album, Derita Sisters 77 cover 24 songs from the early years of punk, reworking obscure tracks by bands like The Vibrators, The Clash, Sham 69, and The Damned. But although this four-piece band sounds great (a lot like early X), there's good reason why many of these songs have been overlooked and forgotten: many of them are just a bit too simple musically and lyrically to sustain interest for long. Yet some real beauties do appear, like The Dead Boys' "I Won't Look Back", The Boys' "First Time", and X-Ray Spex' "I Can't Do Anything".

-Stephen B. Armstrong



### DICEMEN JOHNNY WALKER CRAZY LOVE RECORDS

Dicemen are from Rotterdam and are self-proclaimed "rock 'n' roll to the bone." They play cowboy music that sounds like it would be most effective in an old Western saloon in hell. It sounds like The Stray Cats on amphetamines playing the musical equivalent of a train wreck. Dicemen are the winners of the much acclaimed "Grote Prijs van Zuid Holland!" Whatever the hell that is exactly, who knows?—but it sounds awesome. I wish I'd won it. I love European cowboys!

-chad



### DISTURBING THE PEACE: MIDWESTERN HARDCORE COMPILED DISC NGS RECORDS

Like most comp discs, DISTURBING THE PEACE: MIDWESTERN HARDCORE is a pleaser and a cheaser. The five bands featured (Insult to Injury, Johnny Vomit, Dead End Path, Disavow, and The Struggle) are thrashers and come with closed fists. The songs that I loved were Johnny Vomit's "Brain Raper" (which features some cool samples from the NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD movies), Disavow's working-class anthem "Stiff", and The Struggle's "Law of the Streets". Unfortunately, The Struggle also has the cheesiest moment, a laughable version of Skid Row's "18 and Life to Go". This disc is an 85%er.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### DOUGHBOYS LA MAJEURE 1987 DOES EVERYONE STARE? RECORDS

Doughboys are a Canadian punk band from the mid '80s, and they're great!—a Canadian mixture of The Minutemen and Husker Du. If Rhino Records ever does a box-set companion to their NUGGETS box sets except of the punk bands of the '80s who never made any headlines, Doughboys should totally be included on it. I love them with a quarter of my heart.

-chad



### DOWN TO NOTHING SAVE IT FOR THE BIRDS THORP RECORDS

This Richmond, VA, five-man army mixes Sabbath's warm tones with bone-crushing hardcore. Down to Nothing's message is a common hardcore ideal: don't let 'em get you down; think for yourself. I like SAVE IT FOR THE BIRDS. It's smart and for real. I believe them. My favorite tracks are "The Normal People" and "Who Are You to Say". SAVE IT FOR THE BIRDS is worth every dime. Go get it.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### EMMANUEL 7 MACHINES IN ROUTINE THORP

I have very little to say about this album. Please take your E-Town Concrete CD and your Madball CD to the kitchen, pour some water in your blender, then jam the CDs in. That's what Emmanuel 7 sounds like—a watered-down version of a big, growly hardcore band. However, I have to give it to Emmanuel 7: they have heart. Although it's loose musically, I'm fairly sure everyone who listens to this album can tell it is not half-assed. Don't actually do the blender thing, though: your mom might get angry.

-Franny



### ENVY A DEAD SINKING STORY LEVEL PLANE

Envy segues from brutal hardcore to melodic, emotional rock with ease and aplomb. This Tokyo band has a cohesive style for what may be as rare as hen's teeth: driving for headphones. This makes parts of a song excellent for night-time driving at excessive highway speeds, while the same song can easily be the painful break-up of a relationship. So this begs the question: when is the right time and place to put this disc on? I suspect the genre mosaic that is this album will prove interesting and attention-grabbing, but the album will languish in the CD collections of hardcore and indie rock fans who recall it fondly but never find the right time for a repeat listen. A DEAD SINKING STORY seems like two good bands merged into one.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



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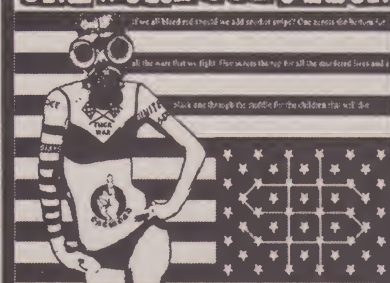
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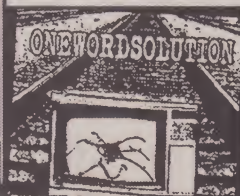
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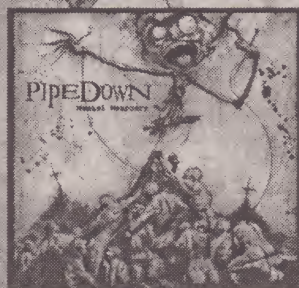
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**ERASER ERRATA**  
AT CRYSTAL PALACE  
TROUBLEMANUNLIMITED

AT CRYSTAL PALACE is an incredibly abrasive album. But in spite of grinding guitar parts and in-your-face vocals, Eraser Errata manages to skank, anyway. Occasionally, this Northern California post-punk group performs and records with Kim Gordon—and the influence of Sonic Youth is hard to ignore (particularly on tracks like "Ca. Viewing" and "The White Horse Is Bucking").

-Stephen B. Armstrong



**EVERTON BLENDER**  
KING MAN  
HEARTBEAT

The latest release from reggae's dance-hall master, Everton Blender (a.k.a. Everton Dennis Williams) is a roots-reggae extravaganza that combines Blender's themes of spirituality and support for the downtrodden. The disc is a true crossover disc, with Blender using well-known reggae musicians from Los Angeles and Kingston to put forth his positive anthems. Guest appearances on the disc include Dean Fraser, Robbie Lyn (members of Shaggy's band), and a rare guest appearance by Joseph Hill of Culture. Along with his own biting,

proactive lyrics, Blender covers the '60s pop hit "Little Green Apples" and Syl Johnson's powerful "Is It Because I'm Black?". Blender has influenced a huge wave of new reggae artists since his solo debut in '94 with LIFT UP YOUR HEAD, and his newest recording is sure to attract a whole new generation of musicians. This is great reggae from an artist in his prime.

-DUG



**EVERY TIME I DIE**  
HOT DAMN  
FERRET

Western New York's Every Time I Die stands out from the usual hardcore screamo outfits. Want proof? Well, for starters, the quintet's vocals are unique, maintaining a sense of ordered chaos and demanding attention, as Keith Buckley's manic delivery teeters between Tourette's victim and tortured soul. The song topics are lascivious and out of character for bands that play this heavy. What other hardcore band has a picture of a lesbian kiss on its album cover and has song titles like "Romeo A Go-Go" and "Pornography"? And

let's be serious, folks: what other hardcore band uses a cowbell (definitely the best use of the cowbell since Motley Crue's "Livewire", by the way)? Pushing musical boundaries tastefully and within its own genre, the 10-tracks that comprise HOT DAMN take the tough-guy mentality and add a bit of depth, making Every Time I Die conceptual geniuses and heroes to thoughtful hardcore fans everywhere. [www.ferretstyle.com](http://www.ferretstyle.com)

-Mike SOS



**EYES OF FIRE**  
DISINTEGRATE  
CENTURY MEDIA

Orange County, CA, is known for its punk and nu-metal scenes, yet Eyes of Fire bring a taste of the atmospheric Euro-metal to the skate, surf, and Adidas-wearing contingent with its three-song EP. Swirling guitars (like the ones found in the Opeth-inspired "Hopeless") place this outfit miles away from the familiar sound of its hometown. If you like your metal luxuriously dark, Eyes of Fire is a band you need to connect to. [www.eyesofire.us](http://www.eyesofire.us)

-Mike SOS



**FEAR BEFORE THE MARCH OF FLAMES**  
ODD HOW PEOPLE SHAKE  
RISE

You may have seen this band when they were on tour with Anatomy of a Ghost. Grindcore, anyone? Although most of you just read the word "grindcore" and thought, "UGH," Fear Before the March of Flames is an awesome band. If music can be concise, this is concise music. Everything sticks together nicely and evenly (someone must know what they're doing!), and through this expert organization, it becomes beautiful! This band reminds me of The Number 12 Looks Like You. It's sick, but within the parameters that make music into great music.

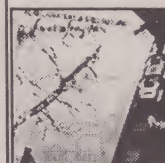
-Franny



**FIGURE FOUR**  
SUFFERING THE LOSS  
SOLID STATE RECORDS

Figure Four is an angry machine. The lyrics are the cry of a cornered, beaten-down man who doesn't know what to do. I guess vocalist Andrew decided to wail and growl about it. I feel safer knowing that he has an outlet for his pain. The band is thrashing and shredding. I feel it. Figure Four is raging like a motherfucker. With song titles like "Suffocation", "Kill and Deceive", and "Poison in Me", maybe you can feel it, too.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**FOREVER IS FORGOTTEN**  
THE ARCHITECTURE IS STILL BURNING  
THORP

I don't like this. I have an aversion to bands whose vocals sound like they are throwing up (except in extremely rare cases). This is not one of those cases. The whole band sounds like it ate some bad sushi...well, except the guitar work. That is awesome. There are some especially sweet and tender guitar parts tucked into this album that almost make me forget the vocals and want to do nothing but gush praise...until there are vocals, and I remember. Note to band's guitarist: please leave band, and find talented singer.

-Franny



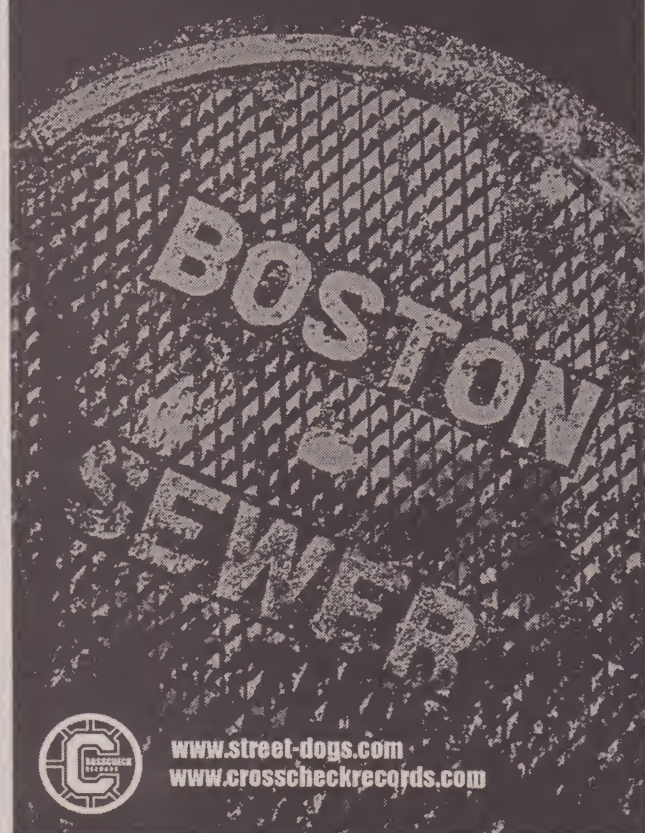
**FORM OF ROCKET**  
LUMBER  
SOME RECORDS

Form of Rocket is back again with an excellent follow-up to their debut album SE PUEDE DESPEDIR A TODOS. LUMBER is chock full of stinging chord progressions and unique vocal stylings, which make this Salt Lake City band so irresistible. With tracks such as "Sack of Smashed Assholes" and "I Would Sell You for Crack", it's impossible not to be intrigued with Form of Rocket's outside-of-the-box approach.

-Chelsea Hassler



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**FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES  
THE FICTION WE LIVE  
VAGRANT RECORDS**

It took this album to kick my Killswitch Engage CD out of its permanent spot in my car stereo. I LOVED this album. Not to say it's half as good as ALIVE OR JUST BREATHING, but good nonetheless. Yeah, okay, so there are things I can do without: co-vocalist Fran Mark's sometimes whiny, nasal vocals; occasionally cheesy lyrics that seem ripped from a 15-year-old emo girl's diary; and "Autumn's Monologue", which is an otherwise absolutely beautiful song sung by Melanie Willis from One True Thing that doesn't belong on the album. But

hot damn, this album is great! Heavy with killer songwriting, THE FICTION WE LIVE is a must-have for fans of melodic hardcore that like a little emo thrown into the mix.

-Chris Guerra

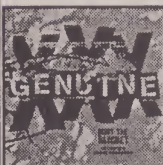


**FURY OF V  
TELLING IT LIKE IT IS!!!!!!  
INNER RAGE**

New Jersey hardcore quintet Fury of V is the type of band you do not want to piss off. They are mean, angry, well-built men who look like they've just gotten out of incarceration; and the music which the band creates reflects the band's image completely. Total tough-guy, beat-down hardcore with its fair share of screaming, yelling, and metallic breakdowns is what this band does best. So unless you'd enjoy your teeth down your throat, get out of its way when the Fury of V posse comes to a stage near you. And for God's sake, be nice to them.

They just may spare you. [www.innerragerecords.com](http://www.innerragerecords.com)

-Mike SOS



**GENUINE  
BURY THE HATCHET  
STATE OF GRACE**

Genuine (which started in 1997) is a 100% straight-edge band. Composed of members from Botch, Trail, Himsa, Champion, Trial, Left With Nothing, Undertow, and others, the message that this heavy-hitting combination of men is trying to send is that they are drug-free, hardcore, and proud. The new release, BURY THE HATCHET, is 27 songs (which make up their full discography) which promote the sXe culture. Fans of bands such as Ashes will thoroughly enjoy Genuine's BURY THE HATCHET.

-Chelsea Hassler



**GHOST MICE/SAW WHEEL  
A SPLIT CD  
HILL BILLY STEW RECORDS**

This is Hill Billy Stew Records first release, and it's a good one. Both bands are acoustic guitar-based porch music. Ghost Mice is a super wacky duo with a slightly insane notion of harmony. I dig their weirdness. My favorite song from Ghost Mice is "The Devil and My family". Saw Wheel is a more straightforward situation. I dig this band's normalness. I really enjoyed their song "Rocking Chair" and their cover of John Prine's "Paradise". I felt like I was on both of these bands' couch, soaking up the organic creative processes. Good work.

Thanks to Hill Billy Stew Records. Good luck.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**GOODBYE BLUE MONDAY  
NEXT TIME WE STOP BREATHING  
LOUD AND CLEAR RECORDS**

On this debut record from Goodbye Blue Monday (a San Diego alternative act that takes its name from a Kurt Vonnegut novel), the influence of Radiohead is more than a little obvious. Working up a fuzzy, abstract mixture of dreamy guitars, electronic distortion, and fragmentary bits of sampled dialogue, the band steers away from mainstream conventions whenever it can. Nevertheless, the music manages to avoid avant-pop excess thanks largely to the strategic placement of dance-friendly hooks and beats. Cerebral grunge may not be for everyone, but fans of the genre

ought to enjoy this.

-Stephen B. Armstrong



**GORGOROTH  
TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS  
NUCLEAR BLAST**

Gorgoroth returns in a maelstrom of metal, as this long-running black-metal troupe has put out its most definitive release. From the opening chords of "Procreating Satan", you know you're in for a demonic voyage—and the quartet does not disappoint. Evoking the dark side of life, Gorgoroth's convictions are not shirk: the band's close ties to the occult are quite real, and the music which the band makes echoes the beliefs which Gorgoroth holds true. Be afraid of these virtues, but be more afraid of the durable yet devilish din that this

Norwegian powerhouse makes. Traditional black metal hasn't sounded this foreboding since the early days of Bathory. [www.nuclearblastusa.com](http://www.nuclearblastusa.com)

-Mike SOS



**GREY AM  
BREATHE ON YOUR OWN TIME  
ONE DAY SAVIOR**

On BREATHE ON YOUR OWN TIME, Pennsylvania natives Grey AM re-tread the same loud-quiet-loud ground that has already been well traversed by the likes of Thursday, This Day Forward, and Grade. There's nothing inherently wrong with guitar-driven slabs of emo-honest hardcore like "Back Off the Cult" or "Forever Hurricane", but there's nothing particularly spellbinding about them, either. Diehard emo-core fans should eat this shit up with a wooden spoon, but the rest of you are better off with your trusty copy of Thrice's THE ILLUSION OF

SAFETY.

-Jason Jett



**HOLDEN CAULFIELD  
THE ART OF BURNING BRIDGES EP  
SURPRISE ATTACK**

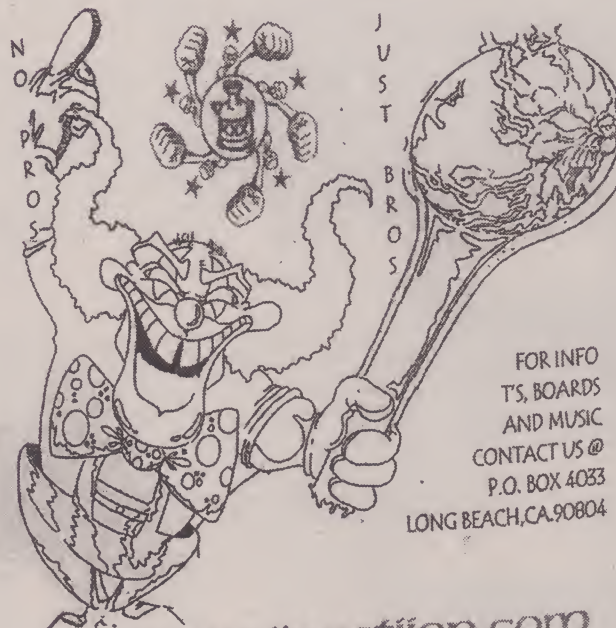
Crushing hardcore abounds on Holden Caulfield's latest release. This quartet out of West Virginia (who has played with such greats as Brother's Keeper, Hatebreed, and Sworn Enemy) exhibits a definite grasp of the genre. However, they sound better when vocalist Dana utilizes his gloriously high-pitched shriek (which, thankfully, is most of the time), rather than when he goes for more melody, as on "Blindsided" and "Drag The River". However, the music is so strong on these tracks and the singing-not-screaming is only evident for such

a short time that it doesn't matter much. It's just that the unyielding screeching on the notorious "Set Phazers to Kill" and the devastatingly heavy "Sorry About Last Night" is much more palatable than the "off" melodies he tries for on the two aforementioned tracks. The band previously put out a self-released CD and are contemplating recording an album in the winter.

-Janelle Jones

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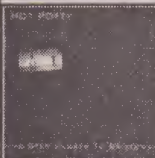
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### HOT POTTY ONE STEP CLOSER TO BROADWAY SELF-RELEASED

In the spirit of The Ramones, Hot Potty all have the same exact last name. You guessed it: their last names are Potty. They even get Josh Freese Potty to work on a few tracks. While the band does seem influenced by The Vandals, they have a sound all their own. At times it's fast and aggressive, at times it's rock, and at times it follows the three-chord punk formula. If you like distortion, metallic sounds, The Vandals, and Nirvana, then you'll like Hot Potty. Tracks to look out for include "Sassy Ass", "Atomic Dance Steps", and "Malise".

-Dane Jackson



### INDWELLING AND MY EYE SHALL WEEP FACEDOWN RECORDS

Formed by former members of Overcome, Indwelling has brought a familiar breath to the Arizona metal scene. AND MY EYE SHALL WEEP is a throwback to the roots of traditional death metal (if there is such a thing). The feverish pace set by opening song "Hymn" continues virtually throughout the entire record, making me want to get up and start my own one-man pit. After the opening track, the record spits and flutters, but generally the tempo and energy of the record stay pretty consistent. The highlight of the record is lead singer Tom Washington's vocals, which made me feel as if I was listening to Hell incarnated in a man's throat—very eerie and totally rad. All in all, AND MY EYE SHALL WEEP is a pretty solid debut...but it leaves a little to be desired.

-Andrew Wietstock



### INDYINGDAYS AFTER THE FIRE ONE DAY SAVIOR

Indyingdays is the epitome of predictable hardcore. AFTER THE FIRE, their new EP, has complicated time signatures but intolerable vocals. They are very similar to Dillinger Escape Plan—but nowhere near as good. If you don't buy AFTER THE FIRE, you aren't missing anything.

-Chelsea Hassler



### INHUMAN THE NEW NIGHTMARE A-F RECORDS

Inhuman don't have songs, they have anthems. They play brutal New York hardcore with crazy breakdowns (similar to old Sick of It All). I didn't care much for this album, but maybe that's 'cause I'm from California. If I was from New York, that would probably be a completely different story.

-Chris Guerra



### INTHESUN REVERSED EVOLUTION EIGHT RECORDS

It's difficult to really put a finger on what genre Inthesun is. There are definitely elements of metal, hardcore, and light touches of emo. Whatever it is, it works for me...at least some of it. Some of the songs are truly original, such as "One Night, This Week" and "Sitting and Driving", which blend hardcore and metal elements pretty well while injecting melodic vocals. However, a lot of the songs on this record are pretty average. A couple of the songs are reminiscent of the mid-'90s alternative scene. The record will get going pretty well, only to slip back into mediocrity on the next track. The best song on the record is the last, "Verse", where Inthesun seemingly gets to where they were headed throughout the whole record. It's somewhat frustrating that they couldn't have brought the intensity of "Verse" into the other songs. At any rate, there is definitely some potential in Inthesun; however, on REVERSED EVOLUTION it is only realized periodically.

-AC Lerok of Philadelphia



### IPANEMA JE SUIS UN BASEBALL BAT VS. SKULL DOES EVERYONE STARE? RECORDS

Ipanema is the newest band from that famous rocker Wiz...whoever that is. I must have missed him the first few times around. The band's whole bio was a mention of all of Wiz's previous bands. Trumping him up as this established star that we should all respect further validates that Ipanema is a band to be on the lookout for. Well, either way, he's the singer—and the worst part of the band. Other than his nasal, whiny voice, Ipanema is pretty rocking. The rhythm section is awesome!

-chad



### IVY'S BUTTERFLY FAÇADE FALL RECORDS

While they have an almost...I'm going to have to go with "Sugarcubes-esque" way of alternating slightly off-kilter female vocals with screaming male ones, Ivy's Butterfly is otherwise a pretty straightforward indie-rock three-piece: they do soft-loud; they do syncopated, tom-heavy drumbeats; they do awkwardness and angst—and they do all of it pretty solidly. At certain points (as in the album's closer, "Robot Generation") they also manage to build a pretty effective sense of tension. Still, not only is there nothing here you haven't heard before, haven't heard played decidedly better.

-Brett McCallon



### JOELLE JENSEN

Joelle Jensen, who resides in Las Vegas—a city made up of showgirls, magicians, and alcoholics—needs much more improvement if she wants to impress any of these folk, let alone any scene in Southern California. Personal appearance aside, the album seems to be one giant loop. I don't doubt Jensen is talented, but I do question her singing ability. Out of all the contemporary crap, the track "Lucky" seems like it could appeal to some people—women, maybe?

-Luke Skywalker



### JUPITER'S CHILD SKY'S THE LIMIT JCJR RECORDS

Jupiter's Child is for the most part lost in a blues-rock hole looking for the perfect long-gone super solo. What bored me silly about SKY'S THE LIMIT is encapsulated by the fact that the group did a super cheesy extended blah blah version of the tired-as-all-living-hell "Sweet Home Chicago". The only moments that did anything for me featured the rapping skills of Justin Roman—but even these moments are fucked into cliché by guitar-god antics.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

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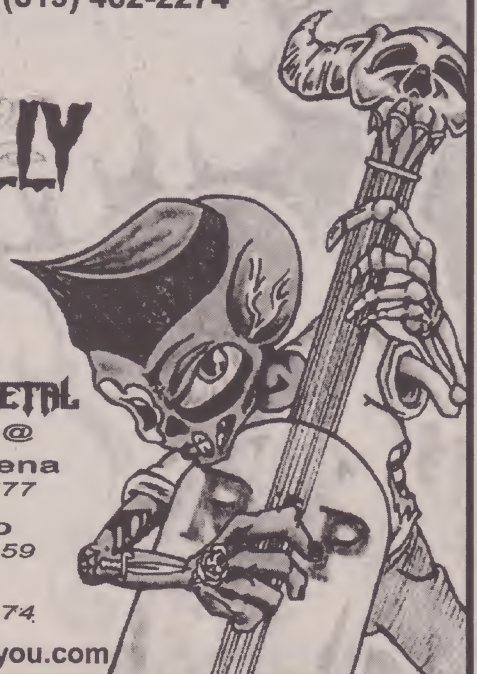
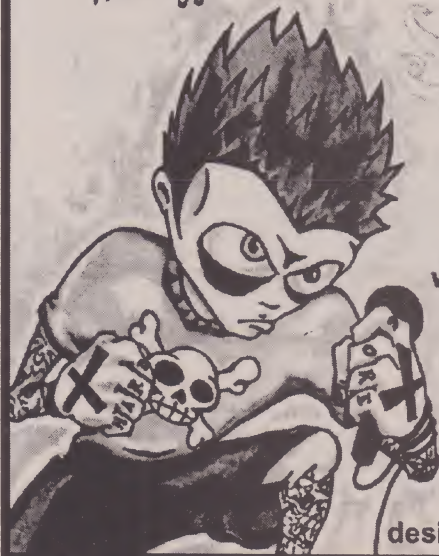
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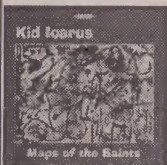
## when a cd is great, i get all giggly gay.



### KAUJU BIG BATTLE REDLINE ENTERTAINMENT

What happens when you mix the independent music scene with wrestling, GWAR, and cheesy monsters? Well, KAUJU BIG BATTLE. I was really excited to watch this because it's a nice, fresh take on wrestling, but unfortunately, the wrestling is sub par and gets boring quickly. I know it's probably hard to wrestle in the huge monster costumes, but the wrestling is just plain sloppy. The DVD features four matches, with wrestlers like a mutated can of chicken noodle soup fighting against a club sandwich. Like I said, funny and interesting in theory, but boring in execution. Stylistically, the DVD is trying to emulate Japanese monster flicks, and features match commentary by Loudon Obnoxious and Referee Jingi. The only saving grace to this DVD are the funny commercials between matches and commentaries. The Piebald video isn't half bad, either.

-Dane Jackson



### KID ICARUS MAPS OF THE SAINTS SUMMERSTEPS

This is a remastered reissue of a 1999 album, a home recording done by Eric Schlittler in a dorm room with a primitive boom box overdubbing system. Eric is admittedly inspired by the lo-fi experimentation of Guided by Voices and Chris Knox projects. Some songs bask in a harsh sun of feedback and distortion (e.g., "Laughing Skeletons"), while others display a sad and somewhat psychedelic mood garnered from such damaged pop icons as Roky Erickson, Scott Walker, and Syd Barrett (e.g., "Firecracker Girls").

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### KILLING JOKE KILLING JOKE ZUMA RECORDS

This is original guitarist Geordie, original bassist Youth, and original vocalist Jaz Coleman of the incredible Killing Joke doing it as great as ever with rock 'n' roll's favorite guest drummer, Dave Grohl. Killing Joke was formed in London in 1978 and were the prototype industrial band. No one has done it better or with more soul or rage than Killing Joke. I love these guys, and I love this disc. Jaz Coleman is one of the most intense lead singers of all time, and he is on fire here. The entire album is just so so great. Go get this and share the rage with your friends.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### LAIBACH WAT MUTE CORPORATION

The newest release from Slovenia's hard-core comic Nazi band is enough to make you choke on your bratwurst and blow heffeweizen out your nose. From the eerie opening track (in which the deep, resonant voiceover mispronounces English words as the "singer/poet" pronounces apocalyptic doom) to the techno/electronic/disco beats to the over-orchestrated choirs, this album has it all. Laibach was formed behind the Iron Curtain in 1980 and has been performing their fascist shtick across Eastern Europe whenever they can avoid being banned. They are part of an art collective known as Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK), which issues its own passports and stamps. Their music is a true Götterdämmerung mix, with every pretentious tune designed to shock and horrify the listener. This is the perfect album to throw on the stereo at any upcoming Oktoberfest party. Don't expect the "Chicken Dance", but you will get 45 minutes of the most hilarious posturing since "Springtime for Hitler and Germany". [www.laibach.org](http://www.laibach.org)

-DUG



### LANDING PASSAGES THROUGH K RECORDS

Dream pop, that swirl of whispered nuances and echo-drenched guitars that can at its best transport the listener to a very different place, is quite a difficult genre in which to work. Just a bit too much softness, just a bit too little movement, and you can lose the listener's attention. Get a bit too raucous, and the mood is lost. In light of this precariousness, PASSAGES THROUGH is quite impressive. In addition to having the balls to open with a nine-minute meditation (a considerable percentage of which is devoted to subtle, reverb-errific guitar tones that fade gradually into meandering organ lines), throughout the length of the disc Landing is able to merge keeping you riveted with transporting you to areas unknown.

-Brett McCallon



### LANDMINE SPRING ARE WE THE CULPRITS? LOUSPEAKER

Landmine Spring took its name from a song by the New York post-hardcore troupe Quicksand—and with good reason, as this English quartet's pummeling display of alternative metal mimics much of what was going on in NYC in the early '90s. Mixing garage, grunge, and hints of grind, Landmine Spring's 11-track ode to mayhem is jagged, unrefined, and crushingly heavy (in an Anthrax-meets-Helmut sort of way). Rollicking riffs, thunderous rhythms, and a slight nu-metal vocal attack that, unlike most of the generic stuff today, doesn't sound contrived or sophomoric is what you should brace yourself for upon placing this disc in your CD.

[www.landminespring.co.uk](http://www.landminespring.co.uk)

-Mike SOS



### LA PLEBE CONQUISTA 21 DESARME SF

CONQUISTA 21 is spirited and upbeat, from the catchy opener "Ya Noi" through to finale "Conquista 21" (which just so happens to be the speediest and finest of the six offerings). Described succinctly as "barrio street punk with horns," this five-piece out of the Mission District utilizes quick tempos and frequently throws in endearing group vocals to add to the feeling of unity and fun. The obvious comparison is to Voodoo Glow Skulls, those masters of the maniacal Hispanic ska/punk sound. La Plebe is nowhere near as fast, hardcore, or psychotic as the pioneers of the genre, but CONQUISTA 21 is a valiant effort. The band tours religiously throughout California, and I have no doubt their sets are quite entertaining. Brush up on your Spanish (the only song in English is "Mirrored Floors"), and be prepared to skank.

-Janelle Jones



### LOVE/HOPE/AND/FEAR ROSEEP STATE OF GRACE Boringgenericmediocrehardcore.

-Chris Guerra



### MALEFACTION WHERE THERE IS POWER, THERE IS ALWAYS RESISTANCE G7 WELCOMING COMMITTEE

From the devastatingly aggressive thrash/grindcore and harsh vocals to the insightful, socially-aware, political-minded lyrics (dealing mostly with gross injustices committed by the greedy, unfeeling American government, their unnecessary war and subsequent encroachment of human rights in the name of "a vague terrorist threat"), Winnipeg's Malefaction have got it right on this, their second incendiary album. I don't know what's better: the overwhelmingly brutal musical onslaught or the equally intense lyrics that serve as a true wake-up call to mindless patriots and a rallying cry for those of us who are already on the same page as Malefaction, aware of "the American lie" and "great deceit" (as referred to on "A Cold War for a Cold World" and "The New American Century", respectively). The most affecting tracks, however, must be the impassioned "Faceless Thousands" and the manic "Ongoing Plague", a song about the downtrodden work force.

-Janelle Jones



### MARA/AKATE S/T ONEDAYSavior

This is 11 minutes of awesome. First of all, the cover art is clever: it's the middle of a red robot with no name or title or anything. Minimalism can be neat, after all. But who cares about the cover? Like I said, this is awesome! Mara/akate has the talent to jam teeth-clenching emotion into nothing but a background drum beat. However, it doesn't stop there—and it's a good thing, too. When everything comes together, this is killingly (is that a word?) striking and an amazing adventure in, as the press release on the band says, "cookie-cutter grindcore."

-Franny



### MERCURY TIDE WHY? CENTURY MEDIA

Mercury Tide brings us a great album with a sound unlike that of most metal bands around today. The opening/title track of the record offers a sound with clean vocals and some great keyboard work from Dennis Riehle (lead singer/songwriter/guitarist Dick Thurisch's blood relative). Other songs on the album contain riffs that are reminiscent of '80s-style metal (e.g., Metallica and old Twisted Sister). This album is catchy, and a few of the verses are in the vein of Finnish rockers HIM: slow, melancholic rhythms and nicely-written vocal patterns. The lyrics in particular on WHY? are touching and pose many questions for our society today. Overall, this very unique album deserves an eight out of 10.

-SupZac



### MINDFIELD BE-LOW LIFE FORCE RECORDS

This record was given to me hyped as hardcore. THAT it most definitely is not. True, Mindfield's guitars are heavy, but the drums and vocals are fairly weak. But there is much to be said for Mindfield. They aren't hurting for musical talent. I have respect for the work guitar players Rainer Sickler and Marc Zirnsak do on the instrumental track "Mucher No Illores", which is truly impressive. Other than that, Mindfield reminds me a lot of a late-'80s metal band. All in all, BE-LOW is pretty average.

-AC Lerok of Philadelphia



### MISERY INDEX RETALIATE NUCLEAR BLAST

Formerly known as Brutality, Misery Index showcases Jason Netherton and Sparky Voyles, both ex-members of Dying Fetus. RETALIATE has a lot of grind-metal influences, but tends to get excruciatingly repetitive, with just about every song being structured very much alike. Start with a riff here, add a grind beat there, stop for a second, do it all over again. I guess I was just hoping for a little bit more from these guys, as they've been a part of the American metal scene for years now. "The Great Depression" and "Demand the Impossible" are the two decent tracks on the record, but the rest to me is just drivel. Overall, I gotta say a three out of 10.

-SupZac



### MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK I AM THE MOVIE EPITAPH

First and foremost, I would like to compliment the sweet insert booklet. It was pretty well done, especially the cover. Next, I would like to make known my appreciation for the tightness of the song "The Future Freaks Me Out". This song rocks my face. Lastly, I would like to praise the band for putting a great album together. "Perfect Teeth" is just another example of their talent. I'll be listening to these guys for many more weeks.

-Luke Skywalker



### MOURNINGSIDE SOME SECRETS ARE BETTER LEFT... RODENT POPSICLE RECORDS

MourningSide are among that select list of bands who, whether as a public-service announcement for those confused souls who don't read the names on their CD cases or as a result of rampaging ego, lead off an album with a song named after themselves. As it happens, they could have jammed a chant of "MourningSide!" into any of these Misfits-loving splatterpunk tracks and it would have worked equally well. This is not really a criticism, as songs like this almost require a certain degree of cartoony horror-movie imagery in order to sound right...and MourningSide don't disappoint. "Slicked hair and a switchblade knife / Down the drain this red called life [...]" Grotesque aberrations of MourningSide / A deceptive likeness of a long-dead friend regenerated to miniature life! Glenn D. would be proud.

-Brett McCallon



### NASTY SAVAGE WAGE OF MAYHEM CROOK'D

Florida's Nasty Savage comes from the '80s, when big hair was huge and thrash metal was just getting started. Crook'd Records decided to release some of the band's material—some old, some new, but all basically the same, sounding like it's 1983 all over again. Do you really want to relive 1983 with Nasty Savage? Nah, me neither. [www.crook-drecords.com](http://www.crook-drecords.com)

-Mike SOS



**a skull means we have no cd art, p.r. whores.**



**NEHEMIAH  
THE ASPHYXIATION PROCESS  
UPRISING**

Touted in the Uprising description as a blend of Swedish death metal, Florida hardcore, and Scandinavian black metal, I'll admit that Nehemiah sounded to me like some sort of bastard mutt. Turns out the description is pretty accurate: they are a bunch of bastard mutts. I honestly don't know where I am going with this. Straight from Minneapolis, Nehemiah has done some serious roadwork, touring with hardcore headliners Bleeding Through and Evertime I Die.

Despite these notches on the old coup stick, Nehemiah is no hardcore band. There are overtones of double bass and throb guitar work. Still, it is much more death metal than I had bargained for, but that's...okay. The band has made a name for themselves in the Midwest, relying mainly on their enormously powerful live presence—all six of these dudes on stage is pretty imposing. Nehemiah sure gives you your money's worth, providing not only solid licks, but 45 minutes on their eight-song full-length debut. It does not disappoint.

-Andrew Wietstock



**NEIL HAMBURGER  
THE SHOW MUST GO OFF!  
KUNG-FU FILMS**

The packaging on this DVD hails Neil Hamburger as the funniest comic in America. This is just a ruse, though, because he's really kind of lame. I understand what he's trying to do with his purposely bad routine, greasy hair, and cheesy tuxedo. The anti-comedy thing worked with Andy Kaufman, but it doesn't work with Neil Hamburger. His "jokes" are interspersed between things like his slugging down water from his many glasses of water under his shoulder and clearing his throat. While I see the novelty of watching this DVD once, I

can't bring myself to watch it again. I know that Hamburger's alter ego is actually a punk musician, but I'm still confused as to why Kung-Fu would tarnish their SHOW MUST GO OFF! Series with this. The only true enjoyment you'll get from this DVD is watching your friend's reactions to how stupid this guy is. The alternate audio tracks are absolutely great, but these don't warrant more than one sitting.

-Dane Jackson



**NERF HERDER  
MY E.P.  
HONEST DON'S**

Nerf Herder's MY E.P. is actually a re-release of sorts. It consists of an EP of the same name previously released on My Records, plus outtakes from the band's recording sessions for AMERICAN CHEESE. If you don't already know Nerf Herder's shtick, it's pretty simple: crude, meaningless-as-they-get lyrics set to sterile, cookie-cutter pop/rock. You either hate this band or sort of like them but don't admit it. Sometimes all you'll have to do is read track titles to tell what you're in for. (Do I really have to tell you what "Love Sandwich" is

about?) Nerdcare anthems like "High School" and "Hotel California" smack of the brand of kitsch these guys have perfected: hilarious and brazenly dumb enough to waltz right onto a mix tape, but not nearly worthy of extra spins in your free time. Nerf Herder never try to be anything they're not, though, and for that, you should salute them.

-Davie Kaufmann



**NEVERMORE  
ENEMIES OF REALITY  
CENTURY MEDIA**

Nevermore's latest, nine-track opus picks up where the outfit's gem DEAD HEART IN A DEAD WORLD left off, as these Seattle pioneers wheel out their agony for another morose metal masterpiece. Their murky mood and driving tones comprise a unique union of progressive, thrash, and black metal, making ENEMIES OF REALITY as ominous as a brewing storm on a Northwestern afternoon. Technically sound and pristinely performed, if you're on suicide watch, it's probably best that Nevermore's work isn't played around you, as the mael-

strom of melancholy metal may be too much to handle. But if you feel that you're up for some dark, atmospheric aggression, allow Nevermore to supply the soundtrack. [www.centurymedia.com](http://www.centurymedia.com)

-Mike SOS



**NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD  
NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD  
A-F RECORDS**

First off, this band has a great name. That said, their CD isn't so great. It's not horrible—it's just not great. They play gritty but melodic punk rock that is fast and loud. I think these guys have great potential. Now, I don't know if it's potential to suck or be really good.—it could go either way.

-Chris Guerra



**NIGHTRAGE  
SWEET VENGEANCE  
CENTURY MEDIA**

Nightrage's auspicious debut will absolutely blow you away, metal fans. Why? Well, for starters, this sextet is comprised of players from Exhumation, Dream Evil, Evergrey, The Haunted, and At the Gates. If that's not a star-studded lineup, then what is, right? But it gets better, as this monstrous metal outfit combines the aggression and technical wizardry of the upper echelon of the Gothenburg contingent to create 11 tracks of the best melodic death metal you'll hear all year. A must-have for the good old metal collection. [www.centurymedia.com](http://www.centurymedia.com)

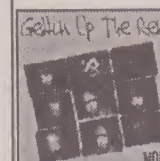
-Mike SOS



**NIK FREITAS  
HEAVY MELLOW  
FUTURE FARMER RECORDINGS**

This is the album you should listen to right after you break up with your significant other. It's amazing how you could make a half-hour CD sound like it's two hours. This is the second album from Nik and his friend Aaron Estes, and in the future they might want to think about switching the album up a tad with a little more rock and not so much harmony. If you're a fan of John Lennon and Emmitt Rhodes, then this album was made for you.

-Ian Wilkins



**NOPE  
GETTIN UP THE RENT  
BACKLASH RECORDS**

Nope is a band composed of cousins Christopher Purdy and Herman Suede from Grand Prairie, TX. Nope plays really lame music I can barely listen to without my ears getting violently ill. My ears literally started to vomit bile while listening to this album. I thought from a scientific perspective this was quite amazing, but when I showed my friends, they just thought it was gross and told me to turn the crappy record off. So, there you go. If you're at all curious, imagine The Dave Matthews Band and J Mascis doing a bunch of Bon Jovi covers at a

high school talent show.

-chad

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## listening to music is so delightful



### NO RETREAT PRAY FOR PEACE DA' CORE

PRAY FOR PEACE is the title of No Retreat's fourth release. More like pray for sanity, as this Pennsylvania four-piece (formed in 1993) cranks out 11 hard-as-hell tunes that are NOT pretty. However, the lyrics, which more often than not concentrate on ugly subject matter and imagery like war ("Pray for Peace") and society's innumerable ills ("Judged By Twelve", "When Will It End?", "S") complements the pure brutality of the apocalyptic drums, driving bass, machine-gun guitars, and rabid vocals that comprise this metallic-tinged hardcore to a T. Still, there are some offerings on the disc that deal with more positive issues, like unity and the idea of being "brothers for life," including the aptly-named "Blood Brothers", "Other Half", and "Talk Is Cheap"—all of which refer to fighting for and protecting each other's honor.

-Janelle Jones



### NUMBER ONE GUN CELEBRATE MISTAKES FLOODGATE RECORDS

The debut full-length from this Chico, CA, quartet is a hook-laden tribute to all those who've failed, realized their mistakes, and risen back up to start all over again. With songs like "Celebrate Mistakes", "Get Up", and "You Fail Sometimes", the point is driven home, but in a way that offers hope and renewal. Though this is another Christian-oriented group who you would expect to see on Tooth and Nail Records, the band doesn't beat the listener over the head with scripture or didactic lyrics; instead, this band has chosen to beat the listener over the head with some of the finest and catchiest pop-punk melodies around. The vocal harmonies are stellar, and the guitars are perfect. The single "On and On" is a radio-friendly tune that wouldn't sound out of place on any alternative playlist. Unfortunately, most of the small labels—such as Floodgate Records—don't have the big radio connections or payola that gets bands hits on popular stations. Perhaps the only way around this conundrum is for the members of the band to play their hearts out at live shows, stick to their convictions, and have faith that the fans will follow. Number One Gun has done its part with an incredible debut album. Talent such as this will always be rewarded. [www.numberone-gun.com](http://www.numberone-gun.com)

-DUG



### OCTOBER ALLIED OCTOBER ALLIED PHONY RECORDS

Formed in Oakland in 1999, October Allied is twang-rocking the party rock with gravelly vocals and good, solid songs. I hear The Minutemen—and that's high praise. I love the songs "Specialized Times" and "Incandescent Is Better", both of which have very outstanding funky breaks and cool transitions. I do hate the name "October Allied", but other than that small bitch, this self-titled disc is a great, highly-musical disc full of thoughtful lyrics and solid energy.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### OHGR SUNNYSY SPITFIRE

Picture this: former Skinny Puppy vocalist Ogre with an album in a neat Digipack featuring a black-and-orange artistic vision that could be storyboards for a Svankmajer film. Wow, that could be really cool. However, this release does not live up to its promise. Ogre seems obsessed with trebly beats that somebody probably told him all the kids are listening to. Combine that with low growl of vocals that lapse into bright melody—that Marilyn Manson formula—and you have an audio vision of post-industrial schizophrenia. This album draws more from the Pigface and KMFDM portion of Ogre's career than the dark malevolence of Skinny Puppy. All this is no accident, though, as Ogre admits to be seeking a new direction...and the album sounds like someone looking for a direction.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### ON THE MIGHT OF PRINCES SIRENS REVELATION RECORDS

On the vivacious SIRENS, hotly-tipped Long Island troupe On the Might of Princes break out of the emo gutter with a work of stunning vitality and unmitigated ire. "Go Fuck Yrself" and "Spit Survival" blow the standard LI hardcore template to pieces. Their buzzkunst guitars and larynx-shredding screams come wrapped in coverlets of delicate piano and the odd bout of hypnotizing melody. The group is still a few years away from their masterpiece (the next record will be a monster), but for now OTMOP look set to mop the floor with their hard-headed peers. Mark my words: Glassjaw-like levels of adoration aren't more than a fortnight away.

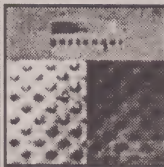
-Jason Jett



### PARADISE ISLAND LINES ARE INFINITELY FINE DIM MAK RECORDS

Paradise Island (which is a fairly silly name) is Jenny Hoyston, one-woman band. Her approach is experimental and stylistically is all over the place: folk, electronic, rock, and just plain weird. LINES ARE INFINITELY FINE is a good disc. Paradise Island/Jenny Hoyston is a very interesting artist. I see big things in her future. I see her getting better and better.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### PASSENGER PASSENGER CENTURY MEDIA

In Flames plus Transport League plus Gardenian plus a Swedish bass player equals what? The all-star metal outfit Passenger, dear readers, whose 11-track release kicks you in the head from the opening of the electric "In Reverse". Citing Helmet and Handsome as influences, the down-tuned riffage and cleaned-up vocals are a departure from the members' day jobs, as the end result can almost be likened to nu metal. However, the post-hardcore sound mixed with these Swedes undeniable Gothenburg roots contain sturdy hooks (check out "I Die Slowly" for a memorable chorus), aggressive rhythms, and massive amounts of groove and soul, making this self-titled side project a triumphant metal release. If you dug NYC's early-'90s metal scene, chances are Passenger will be a favorite of yours, too. [www.passenger.nu](http://www.passenger.nu)

-Mike SOS



### PATHOS PERDITION SPLITS THE SKIES INTOLERANT MESSIAH

Pathos is a Washington-based death-metal quintet who has some killer chops. Adding in flamenco guitars and being classically-trained musicians definitely helps this band stand high atop the heap of the underground metal scene. Bits of grind, black, and death metal are combined on this 10-track endeavor, which showcases two mind-blowing instrumental pieces that display the stunning musicianship here. Despite the typical guttural vocals and general cacophony, Pathos manages to go to the head of the class on musical prowess alone.

[www.pathoskills.com](http://www.pathoskills.com)

-Mike SOS



### PAULA KELLEY THE TROUBLE WITH SUCCESS OR HOW YOU FIT INTO THE WORLD KIMCHEE RECORDS

The sophomore solo release from indie chanteuse Paula Kelly is a brilliant piece of unpretentious musical magic. Kelly, who played with such bands as the Drop Nineteens, Hot Rod, and Boy Wonder in the '90s, has found a perfect vision of her music in the new millennium. The drop-dead gorgeous young lady has a rather thin voice, but uses her unique musical ability and terrific arrangements to showcase her memorable tunes. These songs are something of an early-'60s throwback, recalling singers like Melanie and Lulu. The one thing that separates Kelley from nearly every other female singer is her ability to play nearly every instrument on the planet. At any one time on this disc she is playing a harpsichord, various guitars, chamberlain flutes, tambourine, piano, and a Hammond organ. Kelley had even put together a rather large orchestra and choir to back her on some of the tunes. Some musicians fail through timidity, bowing to peer pressure and never realizing their true potential. Paula Kelley reaches for the stars with her new album. She winds up creating a disc that sounds as if it were from another planet, if not another (better) universe. [www.kimcheerecords.com](http://www.kimcheerecords.com)

-DUG



### PISSING RAZORS EVOLUTION SPITFIRE

For a band with a name that hurts just to think about, EVOLUTION isn't so bad. A very thrashy version of fellow Texans Pantera would be an accurate description of how they sound. The most impressive thing about the album is Eddy Garcia's drumming, which is without flaw. The guitar work is about what you expect from a Texas metal band, but not so bad. The band has only been around since '95, yet this is their fifth album. It's obvious that they are hard at work, but the songwriting could definitely use some improvement. There's not much more I can say, except that if you like thrashy metal, you might enjoy this six out of 10 record.

-SupZac



### POOR RICH ONES JOE MAYNARD'S FAVOURITES FIVE ONE, INC.

The ghost of iconoclastic singer/songwriter Jeff Buckley hangs cumbersome over JOE MAYNARD'S FAVOURITES' dour incantations and overwrought vocal histrionics. Poor Rich Ones have a penchant for adorning their minor-key malfesance with washed-over percussion and wispy melodies that sound as though they were plucked straight from Art Garfunkel's nappy white-boy afro. Though they're clearly accomplished songsmiths, the album exudes an everyman sameness that wears out its welcome long before ghostly album closer "Mummy" unravels its final chords.

-Jason Jett



### PUNISHMENT BROKEN, BUT NOT DEAD THORP RECORDS

Philadelphia's Punishment come with rage, featuring barking demon vocals from the banks of the river Styx. The band is metallic hardcore, and at heart Punishment is pretty typical. I'm not offended or disappointed, I'm just not moved. BROKEN, BUT NOT DEAD is middle-of-the-road hardcore. And that's it.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### RAGE SOUNDCHASER SPV

Germany's Rage have been in the metal game for over two decades, as the trio's mighty power metal has thrilled audiences the world over. Back with their 16th album and the group's second conceptual work, the 11-track SOUNDCHASER successfully merges sci-fi and metal. Based on the Soundchaser, the band's "masco" (who adorns Rage album covers, akin to Maiden's Eddie), as well as an H.P. Lovecraft novel, this album tells tales of despair, loss, and enlightenment (always proper metal fodder, no?) through the eyes of the fictional Soundchaser character. Galloping rhythms, jarring guitars, and whirlwind drumming help flesh out this story and assist Rage in creating another solid notch on the troupe's already dazzling power-metal belt. If you dig Helloween (whose Andi Deris guests here, by the way), Iced Earth, or Judas Priest, chances are you'll flip over Rage. [www.spv.de](http://www.spv.de)

-Mike SOS



### RIFLES AT RECESS TO WHISPER IN TONGUES TRIBUNAL

I have to be honest and explain that I could barely sit through listening to this whole record. To me, it just sounded like an Undying rip-off with a little bit more thrash metal in the mix. The songs just seemed to blend right into each other with excessive double-picking and redundant breakdowns. Don't get me wrong: there were a couple of okay tracks (such as "My Apologies to the Walking Dead" and "Gone"), but in general, Robby's monotone vocals just aren't my thing. I'd say the band has potential, but they just didn't make it with this release. Three out of 10.

-SupZac



### ROY TACOMATOSE INITIAL RECORDS

Brilliantly-titled EP from former and current Botch and Harkonen members' indie-rock side-project is an enjoyable, if ultimately fleeting, experience. They cover all the familiar touch points—Minutemen, Dinosaur Jr., The Pixies—but never fall prey to the pitfalls (watery production, J. Mascis-like guitar wankery, and lyrically bland R.E.M.-isms) that usually sink bands striving to reformulate the classics. In an era when everything strives to be proletarian fare, it's refreshing to hear a record infatuated with the notion of making music, a record that doesn't feel as though it has anything to prove to anyone.

-Jason Jett





**SAVES THE DAY  
IN REVERIE  
DREAMWORKS**

It makes perfect sense for this album to go hand in hand with Saves the Day's switch to major label Dreamworks. It is more mature, more honest, and more straightforward than any of their other works. **STAY WHAT YOU ARE** and **THROUGH BEING COOL** were albums that were made for greatness in the indie scene; **IN REVERIE** is made for greatness in the major world. It is not so different that you lose sight of the band you grew up with. Instead, it forces you to see Chris Conley and the rest of the band in a different, brighter light. You'll be happy for them, proud of them. Congratulations, boys! [www.savestheday.com](http://www.savestheday.com)

-iChow



**SECOND FLOOR DAYCARE  
TOIRE WA DOKO DESU KA  
SELF-RELEASED**

As their name suggests, Second Floor Daycare are juvenile to the bone. Half of the songs on **TOIRE WA DOKO DESU KA** (sorry, Babelfish couldn't offer any assistance with that one...nor can I) either don't make sense or don't make enough sense about anything important to have you care. The rest of the songs would really appeal to my inner-child of the late '80s/early '90s, if it weren't for their bogus references. Just when I thought 'Jenna Von Oy' was going to become my new favorite guilty pleasure (nostalgia is a bitch—it's not my fault), they absolutely kill the mood. Jenna was on **BLOSSOM**, as was her love interest, Joey Russo. Joey from **BLOSSOM** is not the same as Uncle Joey GLADSTONE from **FULL HOUSE**. HE'S the one who used to date Alanis Morissette in real life. Mistakes like these are unacceptable! Sigh.

-Davie Kaufmann



**SECRET SPHERE  
SCENT OF HUMAN DESIRE  
NUCLEAR BLAST**

From the opening orchestration of "Rain", Secret Sphere makes its intentions clear: this Italian sextet is here to progressively rock you with a plethora of lush arrangements that intertwine with metallic crunch. Heavier than your average prog-rock outfit, at times Secret Sphere is reminiscent of old-school Queensryche meeting the low-end rumble of Sevendust, especially on the churning "Surroundings". In all, the 11 tracks that comprise **SCENT OF HUMAN DESIRE** blend the splendor of power metal with the accessibility of American hard rock. [www.nuclearblastusa.com](http://www.nuclearblastusa.com)

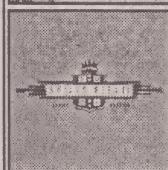
-Mike SOS



**SEMIAUTOMATIC  
WOLFCENTRIC  
5 RUE CHRISTINE**

**WOLFCENTRIC** is an infectious blend of rugged beats and deconstructed hard rock. This electro-punk album from the Brooklyn group has a timely social commentary in the terrorism-affected "This Place Does Not Exist" and the tongue-in-cheek call for a Marion Barry presidency, "Marion Barry". Two standout dub tracks feature Ari Up of The Slits: "Slushpuss" and "Execution".

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



**SENSE FIELD  
LIVING OUTSIDE  
NETWORK**

**LIVING OUTSIDE** is a huge step for Sense Field. It's their first record without guitarist Rodney Sellars, who has been on leave from the band since his daughter was critically injured in a car crash in 2002. Sellars's name pops up in the credits for one song, but the rest of the originals (there's one cover) are a joint effort between vocalist Jon Bunch and guitarist/keyboardsist Chris Evenson. Speaking of that cover, it's The Cure's "A Letter to Elise", and Sense Field updates it sans any pretension. (The Cure they are not—but they never felt that to begin with.) Sense Field may not be TOTAL innovators in their game, but over the years, they've hardly gotten enough credit for playing what a million bands are playing now. Their songs are feel-good pop through and through. **LIVING OUTSIDE** is the soundtrack to a good day. Got a problem with that? I sure don't.

-Davie Kaufmann



**SENSES FAIL  
FROM THE DEPTHS OF DREAMS  
DRIVE-THRU RECORDS**

This recently re-released EP by the New Jersey emo-punk quintet Senses Fail is enough to make you want to be in high school again. Drive-Thru Records has made a career out of finding and signing hot young bands like New Found Glory that appeal to the young, the heartbroken, and the ones willing to buy up every bit of merchandise they can find. The original, six-song EP sold a thousand copies. This repackaged re-release sold 12,000 copies in less than two months. With the sophisticated packaging and two additional, it really isn't fair to call this an EP. The album art and liner notes are some of the finest available, while the musical production showcases the hard-edged emotion and raw power of a group on the verge of stardom. Though the world-weary lyrics and tight musicianship seem seasoned, not one member of the band is old enough to buy alcohol in most states. On their recent national tour, the band was greeted by rabid fans all over the country. This is a great record for fans of fellow New Jersey band Saves the Day or New Found Glory. Drive-Thru Records is doing something very right in their recent signings. They already dominate their demographic, and it looks like they've got another big hit on their hands. [www.sensesfail.com](http://www.sensesfail.com)

-DUG



**SEPULTURA  
ROORBACK  
SPV**

The mighty Brazilian metal troupe Sepultura have crawled out from the depths of mediocrity with **ROORBACK**, a triumphant, 13-track return for the groundbreaking quartet. Finally properly assimilated and kicking serious ass, vocalist Derrick Green comes into his own here, spitting out lyrics with an aggressive conviction not heard since Max Cavalera parted ways with the outfit. The album's music is also as convincing, at times harkening back to the glory days of **ARISE**, like on the somber crunch of "Bottomed Out" or the fist to the face that is "Leech". It's always good to see a band make a strong comeback after a few sluggish outings, and Sepultura's latest release aptly shows that this band has got the desire and firepower to continue to be a force in the metal realm. [www.spv.de](http://www.spv.de)

-Mike SOS



**SHUTDOWN 66  
WELCOME TO DUMPSVILLE  
GET HIP RECORDS**

This Australian quintet is nailing the sounds of classic garage rockers such as The Troggs, Creation, and The Animals. Shutdown 66 seem to be having the time of their lives, and that is the element in the songs that sells the songs. Also, **WELCOME TO DUMPSVILLE** is a complete effort. The sounds come across as an authentic product rather than homage. Don't get me wrong: it is homage; but, Shutdown 66's music could be straight-up 1966. In lesser hands this approach could seem phony and/or calculated, but here it doesn't. Some on **WELCOME TO DUMPSVILLE** is "Pleasantville", "Fink Is the King", and

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**SICK WATER  
AQUA VISTA  
MECHANISM RECORDS**

I'm not usually a big fan of rock, but Sick Water is rockin'. "Water It Down" is pretty sweet and has kind of an alternative feel, while "So Simple" has a Weezer sound to it; and the lyrics are fairly amusing. I'm actually going to add this album to my collection (as opposed to the other crap I review). To get a better background on the band, I visited their Website. I found it especially clever that in their bio they have links to pictures relating to their history. These guys have a good sense of humor—besides being musically talented.

-Luke Skywalker



**SIX FEET UNDER  
BRINGER OF BLOOD  
METAL BLADE**

Six Feet Under is the kind of band you just have to respect. They've been around a while, and they've always been true to the music. This release isn't a lot like their previous efforts; it's a little bit slower and more rooted in earlier death-metal riffs. I wouldn't call it outstanding or groundbreaking, but it's fun, and also probably a good indication of what's to come with their next release. The band's disclaimer talks about how instead of getting offended by the lyrics, you should get offended at how the government is wasting your tax dollars by bombing foreign countries and barring your right to free speech. Who would have thought they'd turn

-SupZac



**SKID ROW  
THICKSKIN  
WORLD SOUND**

Back from the '80s come New Jersey second-fiddlers Skid Row armed with a new lead singer (Johnny Solinger) and a bit of a changed-up sound. While the band was always considered one of the harder hair-metal outfits, everyone remembers the boys for "I Remember You", the sappy ballad that shot the outfit into stardom. While there's no standout hit like that on **THICKSKIN**, what is here is hit and miss, as Solinger does a fine job at vocals—but buyer beware: he's no Sebastian Bach...which could be a good thing, as it allows the band to shift between adult-contemporary, radio-friendly hits tunes mimic fellow statesmen Bon Jovi ("Born a Beggar", "Swallow") and good old-fashioned, pedal-to-the-metal hard rock ("Thick Is the Skin", "Hittin' a Wall", "Down from Underground"). Hopefully for the band, most of its audience will be happy with the multitude of mid-tempo tunes and change of singers—as well as the jacked-up version of its biggest hit, the desperate "I Remember You Two". Basically, half of the album should have old fans clamoring for more, while the other half will have people wondering where Sebastian and the arena-rock swagger went. [www.worldsound.com](http://www.worldsound.com)

-Mike SOS



**SLANDERIN  
A RHUMBA OF RATTLESNAKES, A MURDER OF CROWS  
SPLIT 7 RECORDS**

Slanderin's press release is awesome. "This isn't the Reverend Horton Heat," it proclaims. "The [sic] Slanderin go up to the Rev and bitch slap him and tell him to go in the kitchen and make them some three cheese Hot Pockets!!!!!" That's the coolest thing I've heard in a while. This highly enjoyable European psychobilly punk band's music wasn't too shabby, either. And it made me want some Hot Pockets.

-Chris Guerra



**SMILE EMPTY SOUL  
SMILE EMPTY SOUL  
THROBACK RECORDS**

I was not a fan of Smile Empty Soul. The lyrics tend to be a little on the clichéd side, with somewhat less-than-creative guitar work. With songs like "Bottom of a Bottle" and "Nowhere Kids", Smile Empty Soul reminds me a lot of POD minus the rap and reggae influences. They're really very similar bands. As far as content goes, the album is pretty heavy on the "curse the world" mentality that was popular a little ways back. This gets pretty stale by about track 5. All in all, the record is pretty weak.

-Andrew Wietslock



**SNOISSES/THE SKATEBOARD SESSIONS  
CD SAMPLER  
SESSIONS RECORDS**

Shit, hell, damn, this is the best comp disc that I ever heard. Some really great punk rock by some of the greatest skaters ever. The opener is Clay Wheels' "Skate Radio", featuring Jonny Manak on guitar and vocals. "Skater Radio" (like most of my favorite Ramones) is a direct descendant of '60s bubblegum rock. Very cool. I loved the surf-punk instrumental "El Nino" by Powerflex 5 (featuring Salba on guitar). I laughed my ass off to Bark Hard's "I.C.B.", which stands for "ice-cold beer" and features Todd Prince on vocals and John Gibson on guitar (sounding a lot like Sloppy Seconds). Go, go, go and get this one.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**SOUTH  
WITH THE TIDES  
KINETIC RECORDS**

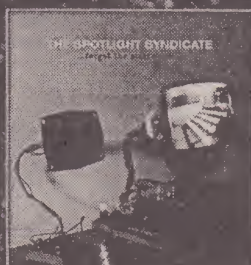
I'll be honest: before listening to South, I already had them pegged as another Coldplay knock-off. The fact that they also hail from the U.K. didn't help. That being said, South blew me away at first listen. Not only are they nothing like Coldplay, but they give Coldplay a swift kick in the ass. Far more creative and original than anything to come out of the U.K. in a good long while, South impressed me with some pretty intricate tracks. Seamlessly blending guitars with rhythmically-imposing drum riffs, string quartets, and even a banjo, **WITH THE TIDES** is truly a record worth spinning. From the get-go, "Motiveless Crime" sets the tone for the whole record with dark music and some pretty intense lyrics. And the album continues to impress with songs like "Nine Lives" and "Straight Lines to Bad Lands". The record is, however, a little long, as it gets somewhat repetitive towards the end. That not withstanding, **WITH THE TIDES** is definitely worth picking up. It will not disappoint.

-Andrew Wietslock



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### SPARK OF LIFE PROMISES MADE. PROMISES KEPT. LORELEI

Sing-along vocals and catchy beats are what makes Simi Valley's Spark of Life stand out. PROMISES MADE. PROMISES KEPT. is the first release from the four-piece that "are simply four individuals who are best friends and love to play music." Fresh and memorable, "the spark" (as the band is affectionately called) had gathered a cult following long before being discovered by Lorelei. "The Sounds of Giving Up" is aimed at the more hardcore crowd, whereas "Welcome Home Relax and Slow Down" is more mainstream. PROMISES MADE. PROMISES KEPT. is an album on which Sol. shows itself to be a unique and upcoming band.

-Chelsea Hassler



### SPEEDBUGGY/BLACK MONDAY SIX SHOOTER SPLIT SEVEN RECORDS

These are both great bands. Not only do they stretch the boundaries of punk music, but they aren't afraid to blend other music styles into their punk rock hybrid. Speedbuggy starts things off with six tracks of rock fused with elements of country, honky tonk, punk, and folk music. While the band's original music is great, I most like their cover of Johnny Paycheck's "Take This and Shove It". While Speedbuggy has blatant country influences, Black Monday is more on the punk-rock side of things. This band's music is fast, aggressive, and gritty. While Black Monday has a few country and rockabilly influences, its main sound is a blending of rock and punk. The closest comparison I can come up with is Social Distortion. So, if you like Social D and some great cow-punk music, then this split needs to be in your collection.

-Dane Jackson



### STOP IT!! SELF MADE MAPS NOVA

Finally a noise band that makes more than just noise. With shouted vocals and insane structure, Stop It!! gives us an example of how noise should be played. If you're into City of Caterpillar or Shotmaker, you're probably going to enjoy the compelling sounds of SELF MADE MAPS. The artwork for the album is an added bonus, with its cut-and-paste look and hidden lyrics. "Amen & Boys", "Remove Your Teeth", and "Beethoven's Funeral" are the songs that make you want to listen to the album over and over. Some of the songs have a Cap n' Jazz feeling to them, but with more of an edge, making Stop It!! a band that's not going to be soon forgotten. With an extra point for the artwork and use of a whistle in "Captain Roboto", they earned themselves a seven out of 10.

-SupZac



### STORY OF THE YEAR PAGE AVENUE MAVERICK RECORDS

St. Louis's Story of the Year has been around long enough to know the direction music is going. The fact that they are on Maverick Records is no coincidence, as they have taken the emo-core genre to the place where it was bound to go eventually: the mainstream. On their Maverick debut PAGE AVENUE, they have taken the path paved by The Used, utilizing harmony, tons of reverb and other effects, and occasional heavy guitars mixed with light screaming to create catchy songs that you can't help but like. That is why disliking Story of the Year for going mainstream is so hard: some of the songs are pretty good. Songs like "The Hero Will Drown", and "Swallow the Knife" are typical of the genre, but at the same time creative. Story of the Year beats The Used at their own game.

-AC Lerok of Philadelphia



### STREETLIGHT MANIFESTO EVERYTHING GOES NUMB VICTORY RECORDS

Combining two of New Jersey's finest ska bands from the '90s (namely, Catch 22 and One Cool Guy), Streetlight Manifesto has created a virtual supergroup for this upbeat debut. There can be no clearer indication that ska's not dead than the 12 poppy masterpieces on this disc. With a sound that compares to Reel Big Fish at their best, this band doesn't offer any apologies for the somnolent ska scene, only 12 very big reasons why this music will always be cool. An incredibly tight and creative horn section combines with some hard-edged guitar and power-packed drums to put a lifetime of emotion into each and every song. Though fads and styles morph at an alarming rate in today's hyper-fast computer-game world, great music is always relevant. This album is great music by some great musicians and deserves to be heard. [www.streetlightmanifesto.com](http://www.streetlightmanifesto.com)

-DUG



### STRIPSEARCH STRIPSEARCH MAGNA CARTA

The hard rock/prog orgy of instrumental tunes that is this album comes from an unexpected trio: drummer Josh Freese (A Perfect Circle, The Vandals), Michael Ward (The Wallflowers) on guitar, and bass courtesy of Mike Elizondo (Dr. Dre, Eminem). Featured heavily is guest Jason Freese on saxophone. The result is like King Crimson crossed with James Chance and The Contortions. It is unusual and unexpected rock improv that is also heavy, almost foreboding. The music seems to lack cohesion and a precise architecture, but this is very promising as a debut.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### SUPERCHUNK CUP OF SAND MERGE RECORDS

The third singles and rarities compilation from this Chapel Hill quartet is a must-have for any of the rabid fans of this indie supergroup. While the band's musical output for the 14 years they have been together is akin to Isaac Asimov's authorship of 200+ books, most of the band's releases weren't really "releases" at all, as the majority of Superchunk music is released on 7" vinyl, live tapes, music for commercials, or pretty much anything hard to find or purchase. This double-CD set is loaded with gems, from four previously-unreleased tracks to dozens of obscure and impossible-to-find demos. There is a great liner description of each of the songs, where the members of the band alternately talk about how they don't remember a song, hate a song, or are totally embarrassed that they ever recorded it. The free-wheeling, Buzzcocks-style rock on this album may not be everyone's cup of tea, but if you consider yourself an indie aficionado, you'd better buy this one just to keep your credibility intact. In the process, you're sure to find some pretty great tunes—along with the embarrassing ones. [www.mergerecords.com](http://www.mergerecords.com)

-DUG



### THE A.K.A.S WHITE DOVES & SMOKING GUNS FUELED BY RAMEN

This album kicks ass. It's so good it might hurt your synapses. The A.K.A.s debut album is by far the best I have heard all month. They are pure punk, as they bash everybody: corporate big-wigs, state assemblies, and even good old-fashioned cowboys. Mike Ski's vocals sound a bit like Monkey's from The Adicts, and The A.K.A.s drummer Bob Williams will keep your head bobbing for weeks. There is nothing bad about this CD at all. The lyrics will make you think, Lukas Previn's guitar riffs will make you shout...hell, even the album's cover art will trip you out. If you like punk and are not satisfied with what's out there, then this album will surely turn that frown upside down.

-Ian Wilkins



### THE ATOMIC MEN BOMB SHELTER BOOGIE SELF RELEASED

The Atomic Men is an Orange County surf-rockabilly band with lots of cool and style. I love the graveyard angle on most of the lyrics. So damn cool. There is a real B-movie feel on BOMB SHELTER BOOGIE. This is a fun listen that'll make you wanna dance. Some of my favorite songs are "(Do the) Atomic Stomp", "Ichupacabra", and "She's Haunting Me"—though the entire disc is aces. Surf's up baby. Let's rock!

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### THE BLACK WATCH VERY MARY BETH STONE GARDEN RECORDS

The Black Watch has been around for more than a decade in one form or another, and both the professionalism and acumen derived from all that time playing music are on display in VERY MARY BETH. On the other hand, this whole affair has the sound of a band that's getting worn out. While some tracks are able to generate energy simply through an up-tempo beat and flailing guitar (e.g., "There Must Be Something Wrong"), the whole effort has a certain sense of "been there, done that," a world-weary, by-the-numbers approach that tends to distance the listener somewhat. Still, lead singer John Andrew Fredrick knows his way around a pop melody, and the current incarnation of the group plays with skill and nuance. If you're in the mood, this album can be a comfortable stroll through a familiar scene; if you're not, it may grate a bit.

-Brett McCallon



### THE BLEED PASS THE FLASK FIDDLER

On this three-song CD sampler of their debut album PASS THE FLASK, Tucson, AZ's The Bled offer some impressive post-hardcore, mixing heavy metalcore with lush melodies, making for some dynamic soundscapes. Energetic and discordant, all three tracks are packed with aggression and sheer emotion, from singer/screamer James Munoz's vocals, the unrelenting and complex guitar parts, and pummeling drums. There are even moments that stray (somewhat) from the characteristic brutality: "The Sound of Sulfur" hints at an underlying vulnerability, as Munoz's vocals oscillate between the normal screams that engulf the disc to actual singing enmeshed in equally emotive, beautiful instrumentation in between bludgeoning breakdowns—which shows the band has range. This idea of variety is also apparent in the slight disparity between the explosive opener "You Know Who's Seatbelt" and the softer, more intricate closer "Spitshine Sonata".

-Janelle Jones



### THE BREAK/LET IT BURN SPLIT EP DOGHOUSE RECORDS

Two of New Jersey's most popular punk bands join forces and contribute three songs each on this split disc. The Break's three songs on this tune are a follow-up to their debut, self-titled full-length. The band's music is a hardcore hybrid that often verges on screamo. The moody, introspective rock ballad "Alone with You" showcases the power and emotion of the band at its best. The second half of the EP is by Let It Burn, a retro-rock outfit that calls up comparisons to such '70s powerhouses as AC/DC and Sweet—with a hard-ass punk spin thrown in for good measure. The vocals have an amazing early-rock sound, while the music is fast, furious, and anthemic. One of their songs, "Guzellugh (Celebration of the Sun)", has the distinction of being the only song ever dedicated to the city Den Haag. This EP is a good taste of two promising East Coast bands. Though it will be issued on 12" vinyl, it should probably just be given away at record stores, as it leaves the listener wanting more from both bands. [www.thebreakpage.com](http://www.thebreakpage.com) and [www.letitburnonline.com](http://www.letitburnonline.com)

-DUG



### THE BRONX S/T FERRET MUSIC

Southern California's The Bronx is proud of the fact that seven out of the 10 tracks on their self-titled sophomore release were recorded in a live setting. Aside from that, the quartet has produced an album that successfully crosses borders between punk, hardcore, and The White Stripes-esque rock. According to the band, the songs "I Got Chills", "They Will Kill Us All", "Cobra Lucha", and "Gun Without Bullets" were written out of frustration due to friends dying, lack of money, and life treating them poorly. The emotion on the entire CD is incredible, the live recording only adding to the album's excellence.

-Chelsea Hassler



### THE CHEATS CHEAP PILLS DA' CORE RECORDS

The Cheats sounds like the sort of band a fraternity might hire for a Saturday night keg party. The beats are fast, the lyrics tend to be sarcastic, and the songs throb with an easy, simplistic violence that appeals to people when they're drunk. But music that goes well with beer tends to sound flat and monotonous when you're sober—and such is the case with a lot of CHEAP PILLS. However, the album's last track, an anthem called "Young and Dumb", kicks ass thanks to the presence of a pretty decent melody.

-Stephen B. Armstrong



### THE COLLAPSE THE COLLAPSE INFERNAL RACKET RECORDS

The Collapse play fairly good pop/rock. The band has sort of a Taking Back Sunday sound to them, but less intense. "Audible Sigh" sticks out as one of the better tracks (with a catchy chorus), followed by "Try", which is equally fun. I think they would be worth seeing if they made it out here from Philadelphia.

-Luke Skywalker



## when a cd is great, i get all giggly gay.



### THE ESCAPE ENGINE CELEBRITY ROLE MODEL FIDELITY

This record has been hyped within just about a couple of inches of its life. That's not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, The Escape Engine show a great deal of promise. *CELEBRITY ROLE MODEL* takes cues from bands like Finch and The Used, but steers clear of the pop firepower behind their respective hits. Of course, when hardcore fans try real hard to emulate the tricks their heroes pull, something's bound to go awry. In this case, it's an overdose of lyrical venom, the after-effects of which are a couple of awkward phrases that might just make you go "Ewww." ("We will encapsulate our eyes"?). It's a shame one of their finest moments comes in "Transparent". It's just an interlude, yet the broken piano is the perfect guide for singer Dom Lettera's voice. Could it be that The Escape Engine are afraid to be a type of band different from that which they set out to be as they were just picking up their instruments? Sometimes you won't know what they're making such a fuss about, or why, but it's still a fun, if unspectacular, listen.

-Davie Kaufmann



### THE EVERYOTHERS THE EVERYOTHERS HAUTLAB MUSIC GROUP

We are now in a swing of revival rock. Once again we are getting sick of all the gimmicks and other stupid shit that always takes over music. It started this time with bands like The Flaming Sideburns and The Murder City Devils, and now it continues with The Everyothers. The Everyothers take rock 'n' roll back to where it was, back to the days of Bowie (who is their number one influence—and does it ever show!). The music is pretty good. "Whatever You Want" and "Go Down Soon" both reflect the Bowie influence, bringing forth images of Ziggy Stardust in full regalia. However, songs like "Surprise, Surprise" and "Ticket Home" definitely have the rhythm and feel evocative of the other revival rockers. All in all, this self-titled release is pretty sound. Lead singer and guitarist Owen McCarthy has a pretty good voice, which fits in well with The Everyothers' late-'70's sound. This record is definitely worth some listening time.

-Andrew Wietstock



### THE FAUX SELF-TITLED TARANTULA RECORDS

Blessed with outrageously gaudy artwork and steeped in the ongoing elektro-punk movement that counts everyone from The Rapture and Peaches to I Am Spoonbender and Hint Hint among its ranks, The Faux's self-titled mini-album is a keyboard-soaked time warp that plants its listener deep within Human League and Flock of Seagulls territory. Bucketfuls of vocal FX and bleeding og synth hold tracks like "Cold and Mechanical" together like duct tape, their macabre ambience and stuttering vocal hiccupping making them the cold-hearted heir apparent to Glass Candy & the Shattered Theatre's icicle-punk empire.

-Jason Jett



### THE FLASH EXPRESS INTRODUCING THE DYNAMITE SOUND OF THE FLASH EXPRESS HIT IT NOW! RECORDS

The Countdowns was a band that backed risqué R&B shouter André Williams. Brian Waters of The Countdowns is here on vocals and lead guitar, giving us some rock 'n' soul that would certainly earn Mr. Williams's blessing. Waters takes that R&B energy into a rock direction ending up with an MC5-like finished product, but more rhythmic. This is an exciting and energetic debut.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### THE FORCES OF EVIL FRIEND OR FOE? SELF-RELEASED

This is a ska record. That says a lot right there. It also has a lot of gratuitous f-bombs and pointless lyrics. That also says quite a bit. If gratuitous ska is your scene, then The Forces of Evil is definitely for you. Songs like "Angry Anthem" and "Go to Hell" are pretty self-explanatory, but set to ska it's just confusing.

-AC Lerok of Philadelphia



### THE GREAT REDNECK HOPE 'SPLOSION! THINKER THOUGHT RECORDS

With The Locust on the high-visibility Anti, it would seem progressive noise rock is gaining widespread appeal. If that is true, the future could be bright for this group's blend of clamorous noise rock, sound bites, and unexpected side trips into brief melodic episodes. The arty approach to apocalyptic rock recalls legendary '90s Texas project Angkor Wat.

-Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



### THE HIDDEN HAND DIVINE PROPAGANDA METEOR CITY

The Hidden Hand is a stoner-rock trio who boast the mighty Wino among its ranks. Enough said? Should be, as Wino's gifted guitar work guides The Hidden Hand through 10 tracks of simple, sturdy songs that plod like drug-laden Sabbath, groove like a slowed-down Kyuss, and rock like nothing else Wino has ever done. Check out the earth-shaking groove on "Tranquility Base" or the massive guitar tone of "Sunblood" for further evidence that if there were a Mt. Rushmore of American rock, Wino's likeness would be quite featured there. A must for all fans of the much-maligned stoner rock. [www.meteorcity.com](http://www.meteorcity.com)

-Mike SOS



### THE KINISON MORTGAGE IS BANK FEARLESS RECORD

This album sucks. *MORTGAGE IS BANK* is honestly one of the worst albums I have ever heard. It is torture to have to listen to the whole thing. Their lyrics sound like Limp Bizkit on crack, and lead singer Mike V. hits high notes only dogs could hear...for the entire album. It is a mix of rap anthems, screaming, and guitar changes that make no sense. Next time you commit some horrible sin, like murder or necrophilia, instead of saying 20 million Hail Mary's, just listen to this album twice...no, make that once. There is no sin THAT horrific.

-Ian Wilkins



### THE LOAD LEVELERS BARNCORE DMG

The Load Levelers mix *DELIVERANCE* with *FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH* and come up with a musical concoction that can best be described as hillbilly hardcore. If AC/DC hailed from West Virginia, this would be their sound. Picking and grinning and picking up change, this Washington-based quartet features members of Zeke and Holy Terror, so you KNOW this outfit has chops. With odes to flatbed trucks, sex with underage girls, whiskey dicks, and two-stepping, these outlaw punks are ready to assault your livestock and female family members with their Southern-fried punk-rock fricassee. [www.theloadlevelers.com](http://www.theloadlevelers.com)

-Mike SOS



### THE MOOMAW COLLECTIVE KISS ME RED REVELATION RECORDS

The debut album from Nathan Moomaw's newest project is a lo-fi folk record with hi-fi ambition. The raw emotion is evident in his angst-ridden, heartfelt pleas for love and respect. Unfortunately, Moomaw takes the folksy vocals two steps too far and into the netherworld of off-key vocals. As if he'd made an attempt to match the uneven vocals, Moomaw occasionally also blows the simple folk guitar riff. There are some nice moments on this album, but on the whole the disc is just too spotty to be something that would get a regular rotation in someone's stereo. The acoustic guitars and percussive drumming can be a nice sound if used wisely. On its next disc, The Moomaw Collective should collect their thoughts, collect about four times as many songs, cut out 3/4 of them, and end up with a decent album. [www.moomaw.info](http://www.moomaw.info)

-DUG



### THE NEAL POLLACK INVASION NEVER MIND THE POLLACKS THE TELEGRAPH COMPANY

This is not the album you want to buy if you are one of those people who likes to blast some music on the way to work; but if you are the type of person who likes to sit in a room with velvet paintings, black light, and some of that wacky tobacco, well, then this is right up your alley. I'm not really sure what to make of the CD. Is it music? I guess so, in a strange way. It's more like poetry to a beat. I was trying to figure out who I would compare him to—maybe Neil Young singing with The Ramones. If you stop to really listen to what Neal is saying, then it gets a little depressing, because this guy hates everything. Some of his lyrics don't make any sense...but then again, I guess poetry doesn't have to.

-Ian Wilkins



### THE NEW BREED PORT CITY REBELS THORP RECORDS

This Canadian five-piece pub-rock band is a rocking good time for all. *PORT CITY REBELS* is packed with great energy and sweet sing-along choruses. The New Breed is drinking and fighting and having a jolly old time. The highlights are "Sons of Halifax", "Born Against", and a great male-bonding anthem, "Me and the Boys". Order a pint, sing to your males, and turn up The New Breed.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



### THE QUAKES LAST OF THE HUMAN BEINGS ORREXX

Why, it's rock 'n' roll! And it's...slow! Wait a second. It's SKA 'n' roll. Sorry about that. This reminds me of something you might hear in the background of a hotel bar maybe like 30 years ago. It's slow, non-threatening music you can get quietly drunk to. I waited this whole album for The Quakes to let go and rip into their music, but nothing ever came. It's the same octave for the whole CD! No experimentation, no cool guitar solos, no interest. No wonder ska went out of style.

-Franny



### THE REMEDY SESSION SELF-TITLED RECOVERY

The Remedy Session sound a whole lot like the band their bassist's husband drums for...perhaps you've heard of them: they're called Dashboard Confessional. It's the same blend of folk, rock, and pop, all tied together by a cute little crush on dissonant, epic guitar sounds. Not that this is flat-out copycat material, but the similarities are certainly there. The Remedy Session's woozy groove is always tasteful enough, but only sometimes challenging and exciting. Bassist/vocalist Lori Marsh provides sparkling harmonies that (with

apologies to lead vocalist Chris Polito—he tries) fade away just as you start to think they deserve to stand on their own. "I don't need to hear your voice to hear the lie," Polito sings in "Staring Over"—one of a handful of star moments that make you love a record that has an equal number of shortcomings to match such heights.

-Davie Kaufmann



### THE SABIANS SHIVER THE MUSIC CARTEL

Back in the early '90s, lead singer Justin Marler left the metal band Sleep to spend seven years training to be a Russian Orthodox monk. After leaving the monastery, he decided to get back in to music with former Sleep drummer Matt Hakius. They formed The Sambians in 2000 and spent the next two years perfecting their sound, as well as getting there band line-up just right. Shiver has sounds that seem to have been influenced by bands such as Tool, Chevelle, and even System of a Down's Middle Eastern overtones. Shiver is the follow-up album to *BEAUTY FOR ASHES*, and it's due to be released in late September of this year.

-Ian Wilkins



### THE SPIDERS GLITZKRIEG ACETATE RECORDS

GLITZKRIEG is a perfect rock album, artistic ideals rolling on enormous balls. I love this disc. The Spiders, a four-piece, Austin band, is a fantastic mixture of glam-era Bowie, Sabbath, and Queen. A dozen textbook rocking songs designed to rock you into sweet rock heaven. There is no highlight tune, no single...the entire disc is the absolute shit. Run, don't walk—get GLITZKRIEG now.

-H. Barry Zimmerman





**THE STAR SPANGLES  
BAZOOKA!!**  
CAPITOL RECORDS

This debut CD from The Star Spangles is a relief from all the crap that's being played on the radio nowadays. They have a punk sound that can only come from the '80s—which is amazing, because the members were all in diapers back then. The album was started when they were all in their late teens and finished in the bedroom of The Ramones producer Daniel Rey. Ian's voice is amazing on the song "I Live for Speed", the instrumentals on this album are amazing, and it's more than obvious that this band will be on the radio and in

all your record stores before the end of the year. My recommendation is to go out and buy this CD, as it's always nice to be the cool kid on the block...for at least a couple of weeks

-Ian Wilkins



**THROWDOWN  
HAYMAKER**  
TRUSTKILL RECORDS

Throwdown is making the perfect music for skanking, moshing, or fist-fighting. HAYMAKER (Throwdown's third full-length disc) is heavier than elephant nits. Lead vocalist Dave Peters is an angry man who seems to enjoy using the word "fuck" a lot. He is obsessed with standing up for yourself and taking no shit. I definitely hear an influence by Pro Pain on the overall attack of Throwdown, but I wouldn't say that Throwdown is a ripoff group. Some of my favorite songs on HAYMAKER are "You Can't Kill Integrity", "Declare Your

War", and "Hate for the Weak".

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**TOKYO ROSE (NJ)**  
(REINVENTING A LOST ART)  
SIDECHO RECORDS

This is a pretty good collection of radio-friendly/MTVish, pussy pop 'n' punk rock. But the title of this album, (REINVENTING THE LOST ART)—in parentheses, no less!—what shameless pretension. Tokyo Rose (NJ) is a good band for what it is, but the music is as original as a turd in a punch bowl. That being said, (REINVENTING A LOST ART) features good, edgy tunes with occasional bursts of solid energy.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**TRANA  
WEIRD WORLD**  
LAKE SAMM

Trana's WEIRD WORLD isn't as weird as the title suggests, as this Seattle-based alt-metal outfit could be likened to newer Queensryche or Live, as there is a penchant for heavy guitars, hooky choruses, and deep, meaningful lyrics. Throwing in some tribal beats, world-music flavor, and spacey effects (such as the ones in the Middle Eastern-tinged "Faith") help Trana stand out a bit. Yet, the 10-track disc is otherwise unflashy and basic, as the songs generally hover in the rock atmosphere without really breaking out into anything particularly memorable. If you like gritty rock with a bit of a somber tone, WEIRD WORLD fits the bill...but don't expect much else. [www.trana.net](http://www.trana.net)

-Mike SOS



**TRAPDOOR FUCKING EXIT  
DEVIL'S EGG EP**  
NO IDEA RECORDS

You have got to love a band that has got the word "fucking" in the name and the "Devil" mentioned in the disc title. This is yet another cool, rocking band from Sweden. My only beef with this four-song EP is that the vocals are not prominent enough in the mix. Trapdoor Fucking Exit's sound is dark and chaotic, with good multi-textured breaks and well-thought-out arrangements. I can't wait for the full-length disc (coming soon). Rocking.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**TREEPHORT**  
BUY THIS ALBUM OR THE TERRORISTS WIN  
BRAND NAME RECORDS

I am so glad that Steve Perry has become the joke I always knew he was. It's something that becomes very evident when listening to BUY THIS ALBUM OR THE TERRORISTS WIN. This record is pretty damn funny. Treephort begins by openly mocking the scene in "Scene Card", claiming that it's just another trend, that no one is unique in the sea of black T-shirts and tight jeans. They go on to poke fun at Jesus "Chrizzist", Michael Jackson, and "Steve F-ing Perry". There's really not much else to say, other than that I laughed. This band is not asking you to think.

-Andrew Wietstock



**TREVOR LISSAUER  
TRANSIT PLAZA**  
HAPPY FROWN

From 10 seconds into this album to the very end, I had a smile fixed on my face. The songwriting and lyrics might not be anything revolutionary, but it's just so damn catchy. There are obvious influences of The Beatles, Chris Isaak, Elliot Smith, and David Bowie here, contributing to a wonderful pop sound with great acoustic guitar work and jazzy bass lines. Lissauer's vocals are smooth and pleasant, adding to the beat that just makes you bounce your head from side to side while the album is spinning. Not bad for a guy who's

also an actor (as opposed to the likes of Russell Crowe and Jennifer Love-Hewitt). So if you like easy-going tunes, be sure to look out for this record. Eight out of 10.

-SupZac



**TURBONEGRO  
SCANDINAVIAN LEATHER**  
EPITAPH

If you took The Village People, threw in The Clash, and then added a bit of Suicidal Tendencies, you would have Turbonegro. Started over 15 years ago, Turbonegro have had the opportunity to work with some fantastic artists, including Dave Grohl, The Beastie Boys, Jello Biafra, and even Metallica. Their new album SCANDINAVIAN LEATHER is a tribute to no one. It stands up on its own and will take control of your life if you let it. It's not punk and it's not rock. In fact, it's just not right. This is the type of music that your mother doesn't want you to listen to—which is what it makes it so great. The groovy thing about this album is that there are no two songs that sound the same, switching it up enough to keep you wondering what is next. SCANDINAVIAN LEATHER is in record stores now, so go buy a copy and piss of your mom.

-Ian Wilkins



**ULTIMATE FAKEBOOK  
ELECTRIC KISSING PARTIES**  
LAW OF INERTIA

According to Ultimate Fakebook's press kit, they are already famous and on MTV and everything. Well, I wouldn't know, and I've never heard of them. I guess they've toured with The Get Up Kids and Reggie and the Full Effect...but I wouldn't know about that either. Whenever I hear anything about those bands, I just sorta yawn and turn my head and walk away. So if you know who those bands are, then you know exactly what Ultimate Fakebook sound like—and you don't need me to tell you. But just in case you don't: THEY SUCK!

-chad



**UNDERMINDED  
THE TASK OF THE MODERN EDUCATOR**  
SELF-RELEASE

Hey, Underminded, you owe me 22 minutes and 14 seconds of my life back, which I wasted listening to your terrible band's first (and hopefully last) EP. I'll be looking for my minutes in the mail.

-Chris Guerra



**VARIOUS  
ATTACK OF THE HOT ROD ZOMBIES**  
SPLIT SEVEN

Haunted by the ghosts of Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent, this death-driven compilation of rockabilly tunes bears repeated listening very well. Blending honky-tonk, punk, and metal, most of these creepy-crawly numbers sound like they're ready for some sock hop in hell. There are a few ballads, however, that twist and writhe with a menacing sort of sweetness. "Eternal Night", for instance, is as plaintive as it is evil; and Speedbuggy's "Time to Burn", an alt-country blues, moves along as smoothly as the tears that fall from a pretty girl's

-Stephen B. Armstrong



**VARIOUS ARTISTS  
CORE-UP! 3:16**  
CORE-UP! RECORDS

This 24-song compilation from Core-Up! Records is a fast, ska-tinged collection of rock songs that never lets you catch your breath. With contributions from well-known bands such as Jeffrie's Fan Club, Big Wig (though I'm not sure if they meant Bigwig or a totally different band, as both bands are mentioned in the liner notes), and The Ziggens—as well as a host of tunes from lesser-known names, the Canadian label has put together a very listenable batch of songs. The key to this compilation is how well all these songs fit together. It very easily could have been the same band performing all 24 songs. Great album, great price...but what's up with the 3:16? I thought that was only for Bible-thumpers and wrestlers. [www.coreuprecords.com](http://www.coreuprecords.com)

-DUG



**VARIOUS ARTISTS  
FOR YOU FROM THE UNDERGROUND**  
METER RECORDS

This comp disc is, for the most part, packed with that whiny, pussy, emo, pretty-boy singing style that I am just sick to fucking death of. Out of the seven bands, I did dig The Browns and One Shot Left. Both of these groups seemed to have at least a degree of balls. The eighth artist, Meter Records resident folkie Jeffrey Caissie, isn't great, but I enjoyed his two cuts a lot. Overall, this disc is a grand bore.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



**VARIOUS ARTISTS  
TAKE ACTION! VOLUME 3**  
SUB CITY

I find it pleasantly ironic that a movement that encourages hope is released from a sub-label of Hopeless Records. This TAKE ACTION! compilation is the third of its kind, released to support and bolster the Take Action! Tour. Both were created to promote awareness and prevention of the unfortunate reality of suicide that negatively affects so many of today's youth and those that love them. Good idea, huh? That's what so many of today's household indie/hardcore/punk/emo names think too, as the impressive roster of the compilation demonstrates. If you cannot find something on this release that you would enjoy, then you're probably reading the wrong magazine. [www.takeactiontour.com](http://www.takeactiontour.com)

-IChow



**VARIOUS ARTISTS  
A TRIBUTE TO THE FOUR HORSEMEN**  
NUCLEAR BLAST

This tribute is just all right. The songs bring nothing new or enchanting. Sonata Arctica does "Fade to Black" pretty well, Burden of Grief does a nice version of "Master of Puppets", and Dark Tranquillity's "My Friend of Misery" is great, but the rest of the tracks are either extremely bland or weakly done. It almost seems as though some of the bands were forced to do these songs, rather than doing it out of admiration for Metallica. If you're a really hardcore Metallica fan, I suppose you might want to pick this up to complete your collection or just out of pure curiosity. Otherwise,

-SupZac



**VARIOUS ARTISTS  
A TRIBUTE TO THE BEAST VOL. 2**  
NUCLEAR BLAST

For some reason I just really enjoy a well-done tribute CD, especially one made in honor of my all-time favorite band. There are some excellent renditions of Maiden's classics on this disc. Primal Fear's version of "2 Minutes to Midnight" might be the most faithful cover I've ever heard. Other outstanding performances are Thunderstone's "Wasted Years", Tankard's "Iron Maiden", Therion's "Revelations", and Iced Earth's UNBELIEVABLE version of my number-one favorite, "Hallowed Be Thy Name". Vol. 1 of this series is also fantastic, so when you walk into the record store with your Powerslave shirt on, check to see if they've got that one, too. Eight out of 10.

-SupZac



**VAZ  
DYING TO MEET YOU**  
GOLD STANDARD LABS

Forged from the ashes of Amphetamine Reptile whack-jobs Hammerhead, NYC duo Vaz are the aural equivalent of sticking your hand in a rotissomat: callous, blood-spattered, and deadly serious. DYING TO MEET YOU, the group's oft-delayed GSL debut, is an acetylene-fueled Molotov cocktail of fierce polyrhythmic pummeling, low-key vocal slurring, and face-breaking guitar pyrotechnics. They're neither as breathtakingly sadistic as Lightning Bolt, nor as art-damaged as Hella; but what Vaz lacks in amphetamine-laced gusto they make up for with acerbic songwriting smarts and a cocksure bluster that lets you know, in no uncertain terms, that they're resolutely in control.

-Jason Jett



## close-minded people are morons.



### VARIOUS ARTISTS ROBOTIC EMPIRE SAMPLER # ROBOTIC EMPIRE

Remind me to never be deceived by artwork again. I popped this sampler in without checking the band names, expecting some emo or indie rock. I don't know why I thought this. Maybe it was because the cover was **MUSTARD**—the color, not the condiment. Anyway, my ears were pleasantly assaulted with metal and grindcore from CD opener Daughters. There are quite a few stand-out songs here. Stop!!! easily has the best tracks on the sampler, with the sludgy and melodic "Name + Number" and "Remove Your Teeth", which is inspiring me to find an album of theirs. Circle Takes the Square follow closely behind with "A Non-Objective Portrait of Karma". This is a great mix of metalcore, grindcore, screamo, and just plain ROCK!

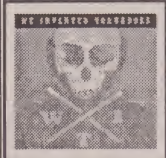
—Chris Guerra



### WARSAWPACK STOCKS & BOMBS G7 WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Warsawpack offers 13 highly political and confrontational songs about everything from Iraq to war to the division between the haves and have-nots. Musically, the band is a blend of rock, hip-hop, and funk. To me, they sound like a mixture between Rage Against the Machine and Hed(pe). Vocalist Lee Raback has a lot to say, and it's all relevant to today's world climate. This is arguably the best politically-driven album of the year.

—Dane Jackson



### WE INVENTED TORNADES WE INVENTED TORNADES LEARNING CURVE RECORDS

Known formerly as Snail, We Invented Tornadoes should have renamed themselves We Love Nirvana. I was sick of this brand of non-invention five years ago. That being said, this is some good grunge—but so what?

—H. Barry Zimmerman



### WESTGATE AFIRE JUMPSTART

Musically, this band is great. The guitar work is on par with that of some of the more well-known bands in the post-hardcore scene, the bass is pounding, and the drums keep the rhythm nicely. What's wrong with this album, then? The vocals. It seems like the lead singer is yelling for the sake of yelling, and that really detracts from the overall enjoyment of this album. When he actually sings (like on "Take the Stairs" and "Tuesdays and Thursdays"), it shows flashes of what this band could be if they cut out the yelling. Right now

Westgate is good, but without the yelling they could be great!

—Dane Jackson

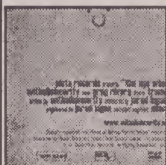


### WINFRED E. EYE THE DIRT TIER LUCKY HORSE INDUSTRIES

A lot of the material on **THE DIRT TIER** (a pun on the word "dirtier") betrays this acid-folk band's affection for Tom Waits. Lyrically, for instance, songs like "Champ the Phantom" and "Let's Call It Hijinx" focus on the weird tastes and habits of broken characters who live in yucky city places. All of the songs also possess the same shattered musical structures that Waits has been exploiting since the '80s. Moreover, singer Aaron Calvert's voice squeaks and screeches like a rusty bicycle chain. The faithfulness of this imitation raises a troubling question, however:

Does the rock 'n' roll world really need another Tom Waits? Maybe...but probably not.

—Stephen B. Armstrong



### WITH ALL SINCERITY THE AGE WHERE NOTHING FITS PLUTO

San Antonio's With All Sincerity is all over the place on this record, playing a chaotic blend of hardcore/thrash/grindcore/metal that is truly abrasive and frenzied. However, the surprisingly introspective lyrics add a genuine human factor, touching upon issues such as loss ("Final Destination", "Shoot Me") and love ("Notes Listen Well", "Crash! Crash!"), and the unexpectedly tender sentiments of standout track "When Good Movies End Bad" that contrasts greatly with the tortured, snarling, guttural growls of frontman Adolfo Acosta

(which border on the demonic on songs like "Dark Nights Black Hearts" and "Differences"). And how can one overlook Ryan Jensen's inventive, mind-blowing riffs and the omnipresent bludgeoning rhythm section of bassist Greg Rivera and drummer Frank Gonzalez that drive the often blisteringly fast compositions? So go on, play this record loud! Scare your neighbors. They're already suspicious of you, anyway.

—Janelle Jones



### WITHERED EARTH OF WHICH THEY BLEED OLYMPIC

Withered Earth is an Upstate NY-based quintet whose death-metal assault is sprinkled with elements of hardcore and classic metal, making this band one of the more well-rounded extreme acts. This 12-track release explodes with aggression, although not in an incoherent or overwrought way. Instead, the music Withered Earth makes is composed well, played with conviction, and entrances the listener. Make no mistake—this band will rip your face off; but Withered Earth employs many more tactics than your average extreme-music act that borrows from Slayer and Morbid Angel...thus making this outfit uniquely brutal. [www.olympicrecordings.com](http://www.olympicrecordings.com)

—Mike SOS



### YELLOWCARD OCEAN AVENUE CAPITOL

Whenever you get tired of liking music that takes thought and just want to have some fun, go out and buy this CD. It is energetic, enthusiastic, and good. Yellowcard's first release from major label Capitol does not betray their original sound. All the label change will do is gain for the band the recognition they have always deserved. With that unique fiddle sound and enough pop to make it acceptable, **OCEAN AVENUE** is true Yellowcard. The best song on the album is "Life of a Salesman", because it showcases their talent, sharpness, and positive attitude. Go get this album. [www.yellowcardrock.com](http://www.yellowcardrock.com)

—IChow

## Salad Days



Charles Romalotti

## Small Press Bestseller

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Salad Days keeps your heart pumping high-octane gasoline and your emotions running high. Romalotti's debut novel is quite an accomplishment...a great book.

—Maximum RockNRoll

Salad Days is a poignant memoir. Romalotti has a skill for character development, dialogue, and rich detail. —**AI Quint, Suburban Voice**

A classic punk coming-of-age novel. A fast-paced, engrossing, and thoroughly enjoyable read. —**Ramsey Kanaan, AK Press**

Salad Days is a book I now consider one of the finest I've ever read. It is a book that will make you laugh, cry, and provoke countless constructive thoughts. It thrusts the reader into an emotionally charged reading experience. You cannot help but develop a strong feeling of attachment to each character. —**punkrockreviews.com**

This is a solid read, and anybody with an ounce of passion for what this music is all about will have a hard time putting it down. The last page of the book actually gave me goose bumps. —**Askew Reviews**

Salad Days is, in a word, amazing. I can't describe how much of an effect this book has had on me. Nothing else I've ever read has so clearly interpreted the life of a punk, and told it so entertainingly. It's written in a way that makes you dread the thought of putting it down.

—Twenty Inches eZine

Salad Days is a kick-ass novel about discovering punk rock during the Reagan years in Nowheresville, USA. This well-written book is instantly recognizable to any punker. —**Alternative Tentacles**

Charles Romalotti's debut novel, *Salad Days*, is an excellent first stab at punk authorship. —**Willamette Week (Portland, Oregon)**

Salad Days is the kind of book that just hit too close to home.

I cannot explain how much I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

—Tim Oi, Boots fanzine

The touching tale of your life, through the eyes of one Frank Smith. Everything you've experienced is here between the covers. Honest, sincere, forthright. —**Gadget fanzine**

Available at [Interpunk.com](http://Interpunk.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), and your favorite local store. For more information about this book, to order direct, or to simply see all of the Salad Days-inspired tattoos people have gotten, go to the website:

[www.laymanbooks.com](http://www.laymanbooks.com)



# hatebreed

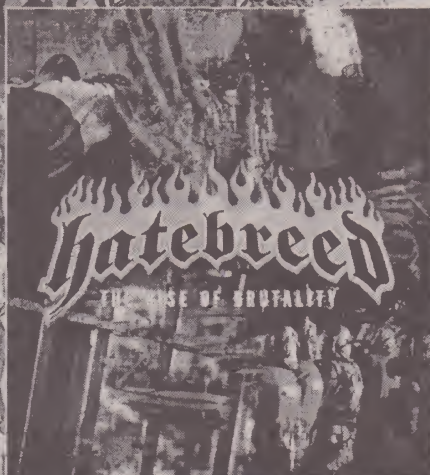


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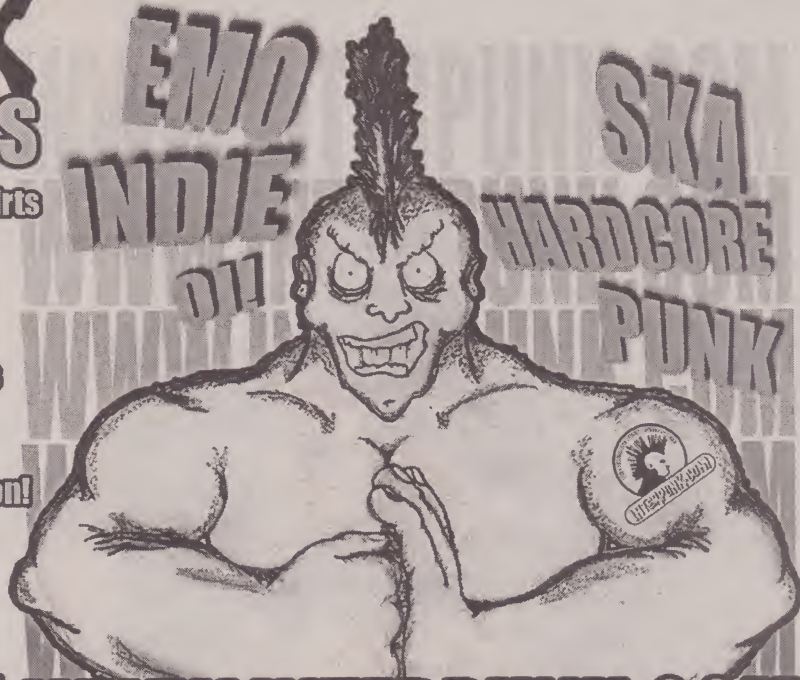
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# **DARKSTAR:** **THE BATTALION** **VIDEO PREMIERE**

The doors opened at 7 p.m. last Tuesday night, and the mob of skaters rushed the doors of the Galaxy Theatre. I arrived at about 8 and waited in the VIP line (everybody was in the VIP line) for about 10 minutes or so, then made my way up to the free-drink bar, where I proceeded to get a double rum and coke and two jaeger shots. I started to make my rounds, and I ran into a million people I knew. That's what is cool about a premiere: free drinks, plenty of friends, and lots of fun, drunken conversation! It wasn't long until the seats were filled with skaters eager to see the long-awaited skate video. "When is this video gonna start," was mumbled throughout the crowd. The crowd was getting restless as they anticipated the premiere of BATTALION, Darkstar's long-awaited premiere video. The whispers got louder and louder as everybody waited. In the meantime, Rene Rene (decked out in his usual get-up) DJed and sang a few songs for us before the video started.

The lights dimmed, music started, and the crowd began to cheer as if everyone had just won the lottery. The movie couldn't be heard, as the crowd's "oohs" and "ahs" took over the theatre. The cheers lasted the entire movie as the audience watched Darkstar's finest on the big screen doing tricks they didn't think could be done. The crowd's focus on the screen was inexorable, and their loudness increased as the best tricks (saved for last) started. The crowd was sitting on the edge of their seats. "What?!" and "How the hell did he do that?" could be heard continuously from the skaters in the audience. Finally, the screen went black, and the theatre shook with cheers. Somewhere around that time, the focus shifted over to the free booze at the bar, which was rapidly running out. There was a mad rush towards the bar. I got in on some of that and had a few more shots, and then it was over. At this time I ran into Chet Thomas at another bar, and he hooked me up with a drink out of pocket. Thanks for inviting me. I had a good time, Chet!

**SKATE SECTION**  
**STORIES & PHOTOS BY:**  
**LOUIE BAR@**  
**SK8SHOP.com**



### Day One

We were invited by Oliver Flores to hop on the Beer

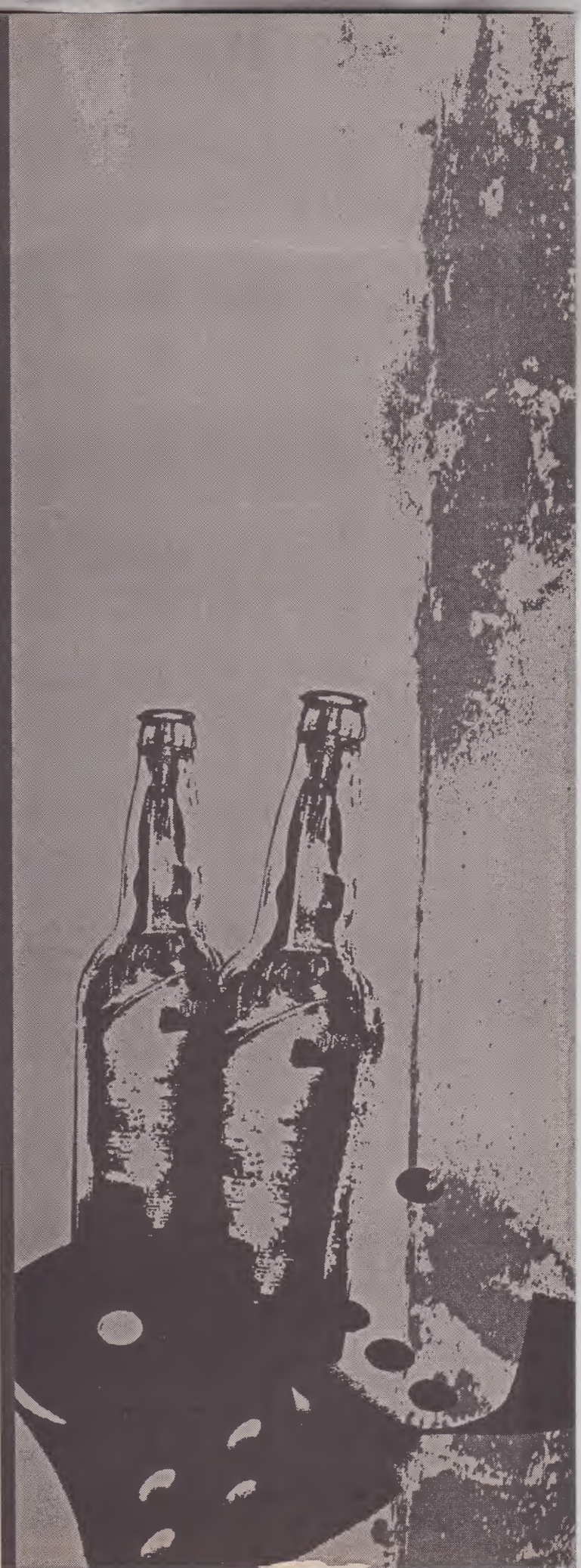
Bus that was heading from San Diego to San Francisco, so we decided we would take advantage of the Deluxe hospitality and meet him down at the Park-N-Ride at the 78 and 5 freeways in Oceanside at 7 a.m. When we arrived, there was already a pretty good-size crowd developing. By 8, everybody had showed up and was ready to go. I would like to also thank Oliver at this time for making that special stop at 7-Eleven and grabbing that tasty McMuffin thing, because I was starving and didn't eat before I showed up! This is also about the time that I met our bus driver, Raul (a.k.a. "Daddy").

This guy is one funny motherfucker and was perfectly aware of all the smoking and drinking that was going to be taking place on his bus over the next 12 hours—and was hella cool with it. So everybody was on the bus, and we were off. And the beers were flowing—so fast, in fact, that by the time we reached the first stop in Orange County, about 30% of the bus already had a good buzz going. We arrived in O.C. about an hour later, and got to hop out and hit the Burger King, waiting for a few more people to show up. Everybody was milling around at the Park-N-Ride, talking shit, skating around—and, of course, drinking. Oliver busted out some nice Anti Hero beer cozies at this point, which were very helpful. We hopped back on the bus and headed out to the Skatelab area in Simi Valley. I guess I had lost track of time, because we got stuck in some serious traffic, as it was now 1 in the afternoon. It took five hours to reach the far end of Los Angeles! By now we had gone through well over 180 beers, and everybody on the bus was pretty hammered. Oliver kept grabbing the microphone and talking shit, which was funny as hell. '80s rock and metal was blasting throughout the bus. A few seats behind me, somebody grabbed the bottom of one of the 30 packs and busted out the Spitfire Dice, "Everybody's a winner" was heard for the next three hours, and a lot of money exchanged hands...along with another 180 beers. I have no idea what was going on in the back of the bus, but I am sure it was more of the same. Good livin'! This is the way to travel. We finally headed up the Grapevine and were in the "Bathtub of California" by 2. We got the bus so smoky that somebody opened the emergency hatches to let the smoke pour out—and in came the heat of the Mojave Desert. At this point, Donny (a.k.a. "Red, White, and Blue") from Pharmacy Ride Shop decided to pull the hatch closed, but when he did it slammed down on him, knocking him to the floor, cutting his face and arm...which was pretty funny. This part of the ride sucked. I was over-drinking. It was like 3 and hot as fuck! We arrived at Santa Nella, stopped for more food, and decided no more smoking: time to chill out and shut the fuck up. It was time to let the AC kick in!

Daddy also thought it was time for his "children" to watch a movie and grabbed MR. BEAN for us to watch. This didn't last long, as you have to be pretty hammered to get into Mr. Bean—but it was a worthwhile attempt. Oliver ditched that movie and threw in the Plan B video. Before we reached the city, somebody puked on the floor a few chairs back, which was a pretty shitty way to spend the last 30 minutes of our bus ride!

Somewhere after 6 p.m., we finally reached the city. We met up with Mic-E Reyes, "the most dangerous man in San Francisco," for a shot of Jaegermeister and a beer at a local bar called Pops. We were now in the city, and it was hard as hell to move that big-ass bus around. I got to talk to Mic-E a little bit, as well as Gabe from DVS, Mike Page from Turnyeto, and a few others.

Another big dice game broke out, and this time my associate and sales manager at V K Skate John Torchia managed to come up and take some money, which was kind of cool. After a few more drinks, we hopped back on the bus and headed to the Holiday Inn, where the majority of the people were staying. We didn't have a room yet, so we decided to split one with some of the guys from Decade Board Shop. After getting a little grub and typing all this shit out, I decided to call it a day.







### Day 3—The Shop-Owner Contest & the Drive Home

The course for the contest was two bank ramps back to back, with a pink beater car in between. Someone 360 flipped it and took home some custom boards and \$500 worth of Deluxe gear. Linsey Robertson was there skating, also. The all-star judging panel consisted of Trainwreck, Frank Gerwer, and Dave Duren; while Brian Schaefer entertained us and made fun of everything and anyone on the bull horn.

As you can see by the crowd at yesterday's Best Trick contest, the Bayview Rumble had a pretty good turnout. I heard Dustin Dollin won it for the gap kickflip 50-50 he did. I was curious about how much actual business was going down, so I asked all my sales-rep friends how things went. Most of them say it's about an even split between legit shop owners looking to buy and just random lurking partiers. If you're at a company thinking of getting space at the next Bayview Rumble, I'd recommend it. The hospitality is amazing, there are no badges, no meathead security guards who don't skate, and no \$10 slices of pizza and \$8 beers (like the trade shows in a convention center always have). My stripper wallet didn't get much use because there were free food and drink everywhere. You can have all the beer you want in your booth, you're allowed to take photos, anyone can walk around with a skateboard, and anyone who wants can just walk in. That sounds totally normal, and it is; other trade shows are not normal.

After eating and drinking at Deluxe—for free, of course—we all jumped back onto the luxury booze liner. Paul from Toss in Hesperia made a brand-new purchase, which included nine chambers of Nor Cal love. We decided to begin gambling again, and Oliver came up on about \$200 in four rolls. We were all happy to see our favorite emcee get some! It was beer, nine chambers, beer, some wrestling between "the Wreck" and "Red, White, and Blue," more beer, food stop, of course more beer, and ice cream! We rocked some metal and rock 'n' roll the rest of the ride, and got back down to Oceanside around 2 in the morning. Overall, it was the best bus trip I have ever enjoyed. Thank you, Deluxe, for all of the fun and for covering our travel expenses. We would like to hear from you next time you're down in Southern California. Come by, drink a beer, skate some shit, and have a great time. Deluxe is the best! Everyone should be rocking the goods that are manufactured and sold from the Nor Cal Distributors. "They're Skaters, supporting Skaters, keeping Skating real, raw, and fun!"



### Skatepark of Tampa's Rob Meronek

I'm not sure if I felt more like a kid in a candy store or a Deluxe team rider when I got to go through their large warehouse of all those companies and pick out whatever I wanted to set up a new complete. Thanks to Jim Theibaud for that hook-up. Since I'm too old and set in my ways to change trucks, I had to get some Ventures somewhere. No problem there, since it's a walk across the street to get to the Lucky, Think, and Venture warehouse. Jim over there hooked me up right. After that, Brian and I took a walk through the Thrasher and Slap buildings. I tried not to nerd out and act too excited, but that was just cool as hell being there and seeing where it all gets done at a magazine I grew up reading cover to cover (and still do to this day). All of these places are on one city block, right next to each other.

Nothing much skate-wise went down today. Once Brian and I got settled in his house and took care of some bid'niss matters, we headed out to the local hangout called Pop's—after driving around the city for a little bit for me to check things out. Here's a condensed version of the interesting points:

\*In San Francisco, you can be sitting in 80-degree temps and have full sunshine, while a few blocks away there's some creepy fog on a giant hilltop that makes you feel like you're a thousand miles from the sunshine, since it's darker there and 15 degrees cooler.

\*I can't believe they make roads and homes on hills that steep.

\*The subways are the cleanest ones I've been in.

\*When driving through the city, it seems you can spot something skateable on nearly every block.

\*The Castro district that we drove through is really, really, very openly gay. Is everyone really openly straight in other parts of the city? Well, no. I guess that would be too weird. Rainbow signs were embedded into everything—cars, business windows and signs, the sidewalks, etc.

\*Elissa Steamer and Dustin Dollin make good use of the pool table. Everyone should be as happy as Rob Hoovis when they're drunk.

\*LJ and Rob Hoovis like to skate and breakdance after a few beers. The inside and outside of Pop's bar...Kiddies, don't spend too much time at places like this if you grow up.

\*At the bar, the same old ruckus went down that you're used to reading about; blah blah blah was wasted, blah blah blah threw a beer bottle, blah blah blah got in a fight...Just take a look at the photos if you're into that.

I just watched the sickest Best Trick contest I've seen in a while. 10 grand was on the line for the winner. From where I was standing, you can't really tell there's a 12-foot deck on that bank to bank. Some damn good moves were thrown down, including:

\*Steve Nesser: kickflip melon, pop shuv, varial flip—all over a 12-foot deck with an extra few feet to clear the step up on the other side. A varial flip over that? Damn. Sorry I missed filming it.

\*Harold Hunter: Remember that ASR stunt where he almost took his head off on his first trick out? He pulled that move again. First trick out, he rolled across the deck and attempted to roll over the step up and down the bank, but instead hung up on the step up and slammed right to flat. That must have sucked. The whole building was laughing after the heckling he got on the mic.

\*Jon Allie: They're not announcing the winners until later tonight at some bar (which I'm skipping because I'm a little partied out), but I think it may be either Jon or Steve Nesser. He kickflip back lipped the rail and also killed the hubbas.

\*Alex Trainwreck Gall: He's a possible winner also. He only skated maybe the first 10 minutes of the 45-minute jam, but he came out swinging with back tails to fakie on the hubbas, switch front boards on the rail, and switch 50-50s on the rail (which was supposed to be square but ended up being round, which made it pretty scary).

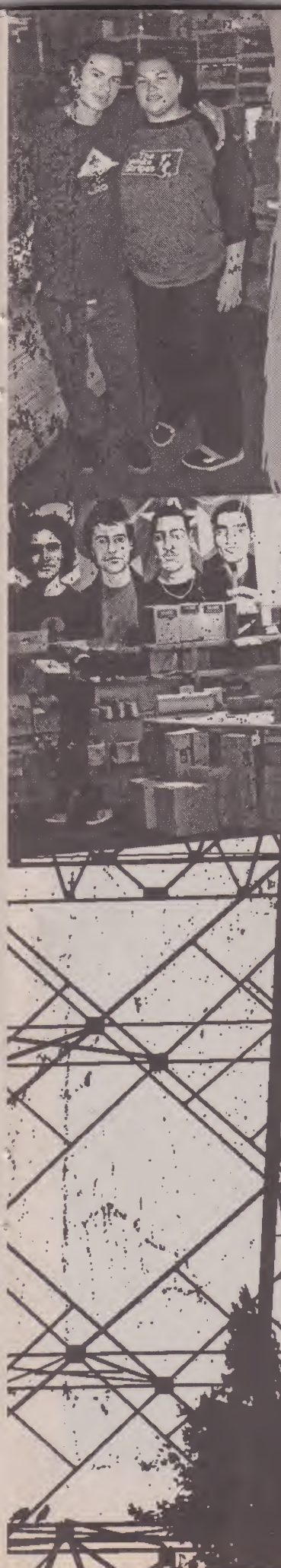
\*Corey Duffel. Wow, he rips for a trashy white dude. He's another possible 10-grand winner. After doing pop shuv frontside 5-0s on the hubba, kickflip frontside 50-50s on the hubba, and gigantic crail grab ollies over the whole thing, he spent the remainder of the time attempting kickflip frontside 50-50s on the rail.

\*the Natural Concept dude: Sorry, can't remember his name. That sucks, because I've actually hung out with him. I have a bad problem with names that I need to get fixed right away. Anyway, he did stuff like back-side 180 melon grabbing the whole thing; and almost killed himself attempting to Sal flip the thing.

Hairstyle update: Bryan Herman shaved his head. Evan Hernandez has a huge-ass fro. Mic-e Reyes still has the Backstreet Boys cut.

That's about it for today. I'm writing this while being slammed around in Brian's truck on the road to Deluxe so I can upload these photos and video for you nerds. Enjoy.

Oops, never mind. No one was at Deluxe or the Thrasher offices at 8 p.m. on Saturday. The SOTY video premiere and partying is going down at this bar called Slim's. We're skipping that for now and going to eat.





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That sentence above was written last night at about 8. It's now Sunday morning at about 11, and I'm at the Deluxe offices uploading the photos and video that you're looking at right now. About five or six hours ago, I was still holding it down at some after party/bar I ended up at...which I now wish I definitely didn't do.

Today, some kind of shop-owner/buyer contest is going down, which should be pretty fun. If I can get this bad hangover to go away, I might just skate in that.

One last irrelevant-to-skateboarding point: Deluxe has some kind of restriction on their network for accessing popular skateboard-ing sites—including this site, which is part of the reason this story's a day late. I attempted to pull some crazy workaround to get the photos and video put in the database, but I'm over it now. Check out photos and video when I get back to the comfort of home on Monday.

Okay, never mind—I just figured out a way through. Can you tell I don't ever edit what I write? What? Did I just spit out that nerdy crap? Like you care. Whatever. Blah. I'm going to get off this keyboard, catch up with everyone, and go have some fun.

I have two brand-new batteries for my laptop and a long plane ride, which explains this wall of long text about the last day of the Bayview Rumble.

Today sucked for me. I paid the price for partying last night. I woke up in a chair that doesn't even recline at my friend Jen's house still feeling the evil alcohol from the night before. All I had the energy to do was go to the World's Best Shop-Owner contest held at the Deluxe offices. It was a super fun weekend, but I'm really glad I'm on a plane back home right now. Good bye, California. I'll miss you, I love you, and I'll see you soon.





### Skateboarding Weekend by John Torchia

It all began at Dave Reul's house on Friday night around midnight. I showed up with a 12-pack of Budweiser after skating Laguna Niguel with some friends and my son Isaac. Inside the house was a crew of Hollywood filmheads—actors, extras, and future movie stars. Inside the garage, Brian Patch and the Reuler were rebuilding the extension on the mini-ramp and setting in some pool coping. Nothin' like some remodeling at the Red Neck Ranch after midnight. I cut out of there around 3:00, then back up for soccer at 6:30. The Fire Hawks (Isaac's soccer team) crushed the other team. I was out to reorganize the V K Skateboard Distribution warehouse. It's 4:20 now, and I'm feelin' hella burnt out—but excited to skate the Pink Motel. I rolled up to L.A. at 85 mph. It is a pretty quick trip without traffic—about 40 minutes from the office.

The first person I see is Dan from JUICE MAGAZINE, smiling as always. I grabbed my board and jumped into the shallow

end. Ended up skating most of the afternoon, had a couple beers, skated with a bunch of gnarly pool-riders, and listened to some fine American punk-rock music. I have always loved skating to live music; it just amps the session up to new levels. Everyone just starts killing it! It was starting to get dark, and everyone was getting pretty drunk. The sun had slipped into the nighttime, and it was time for the Kreper Trucks video premier. This was the best location for a video premier possible: down in the deep end of the pool. It seemed so natural to view Skating on the wall of a sick-ass pool. The video was filmed and edited very well, with a lot of individual style in all of the riders' parts. I was really hyped to see my friends get their own parts in the film: Brigham Edwards, Ryan Carpenter, Dave Reul. All the rest of the riders were killing it, too, and I just don't really know any of them. Gotta give some love up to my friends for all of their hard work and amazing skateboarding abilities. You guys are pushing the level every time you skate, and you deserve all the respect—you've earned it! More skating and beer-drinking, into the night. I cut out around 11:00. Then we checked out the Lava Lounge and closed that down. After that we grabbed some Denny's and called it good.

Sunday was a fun day at the Basic Pool. We got to work on that Hollywood thing again—a bunch of skating and beer-drinking. Dennis Lamb (father of legendary grom Devon Lamb) recently acquired Ryan Sheckler's mini-ramp and has it assembled in the backyard. We got to skate with Benji Galloway, Dave Reul, Devon Lamb, Brian Patch, Sergie Ventura, and Chris Graham. Another super fun session with my friends. Dennis collected some cash and hooked everyone up with his expert BBQing. We all got to enjoy the hospitality of the Lamb family. They're some of the nicest people you could meet! Thanks, Dave Reul, Dennis Lamb, Kreper Trucks, Rene at Sacrifice Skateboards, James Dockett Phobia Cinematographer/Editor, Paul at Iron Fist Skateboards, and Jimmy at A.D.D. Marketing and Advertising for having my back when the shit was going down. Respect was earned over the weekend. The skaters stayed a family—like it should be: just skaters, no division, no haters, no separation—one family together, just a bunch of fucking skaters. Live to Skate, Skate to Live!





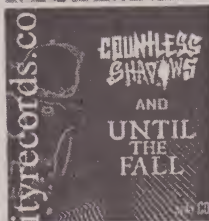
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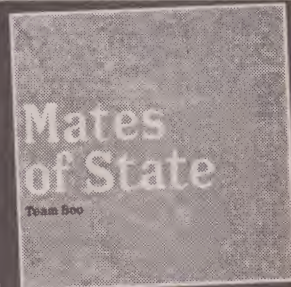
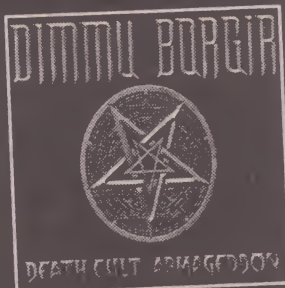
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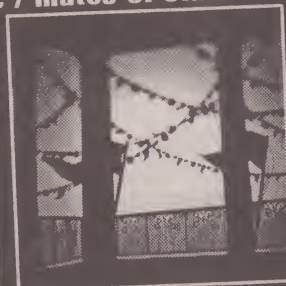
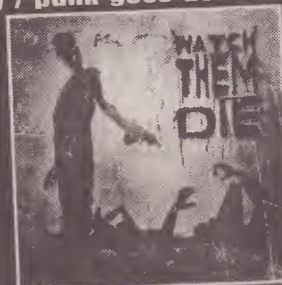
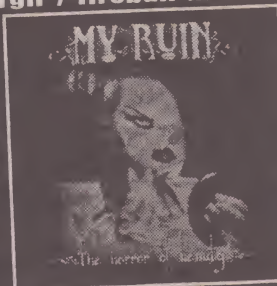
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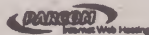
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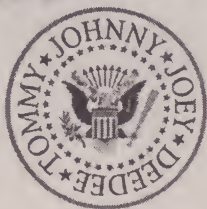
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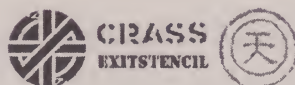
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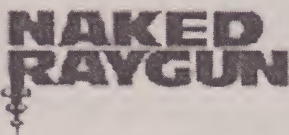
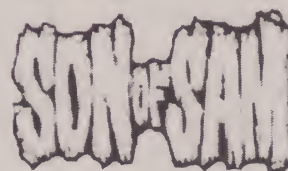
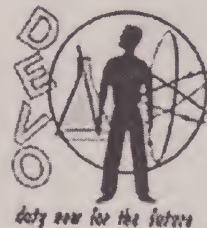
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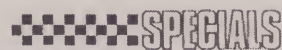
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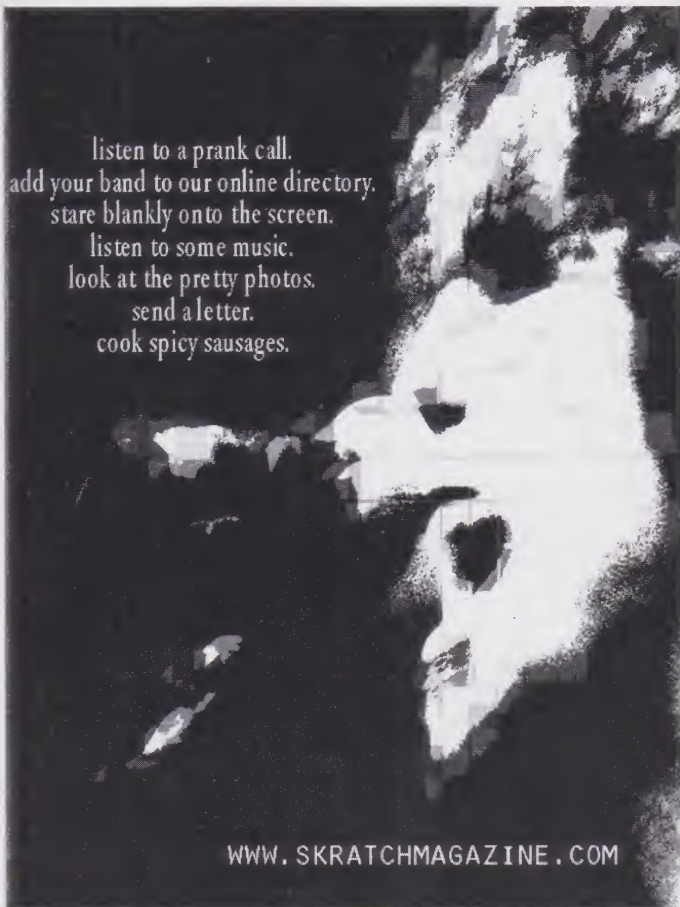
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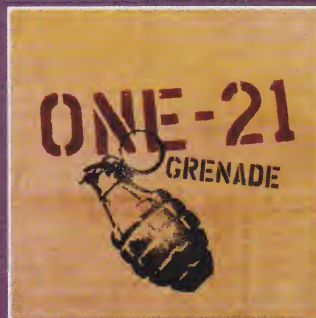
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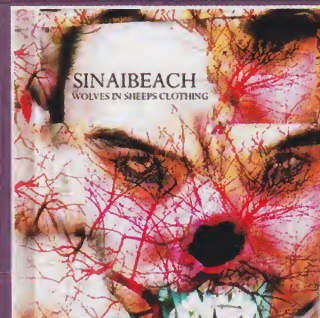
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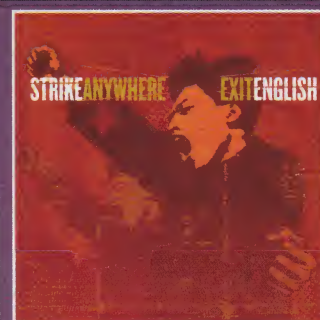
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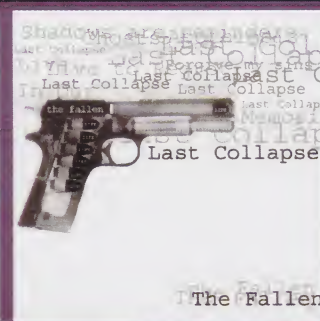
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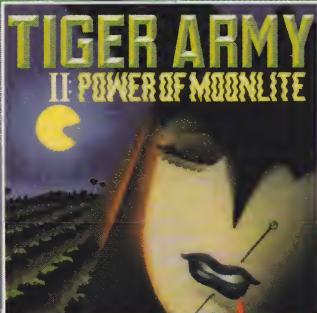
**ALL TITLES ON SALE AT** (from 10/16 - 11/15)



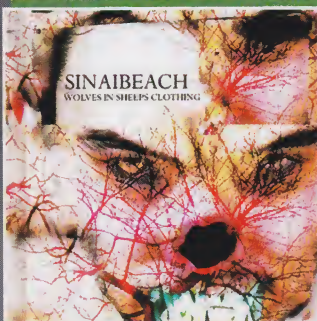
# BIONIC RECORDS RECORDS CD SALE.

from 10/16 - 11/14

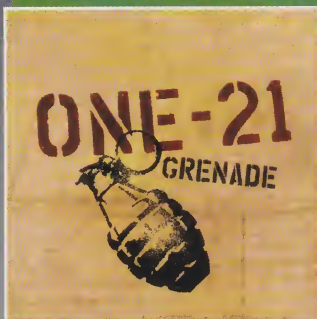
TIGER ARMY



SINAI BEACH



ONE 21



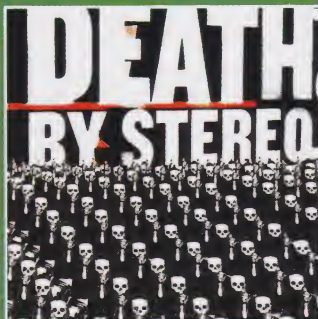
NEKROMANTIX



JOE STRUMMER + THE MESCALEROS



DEATH BY STEREO



Death By Stereo  
'Into the Valley of Death'  
(11/2 at Bren Events Center w/ AFI)

Tiger Army 'II: Power of Moonlite'  
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# "dangerous rock"



exhibit A



**YEAR FUTURE** "Year Future"  
CDEP/12" out November



**THE MARS VOLTA** "De-Loused..."  
Gatefold 2LP w/ poster out Oct. 21



**SUNSHINE** "Necromance"  
CD out October 21



**VAZ** "Dying to Meet You"  
CD/LP in stores now

exhibit B

**LOVIN' IT GOES**  
*Acoustic*

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**THRICE**  
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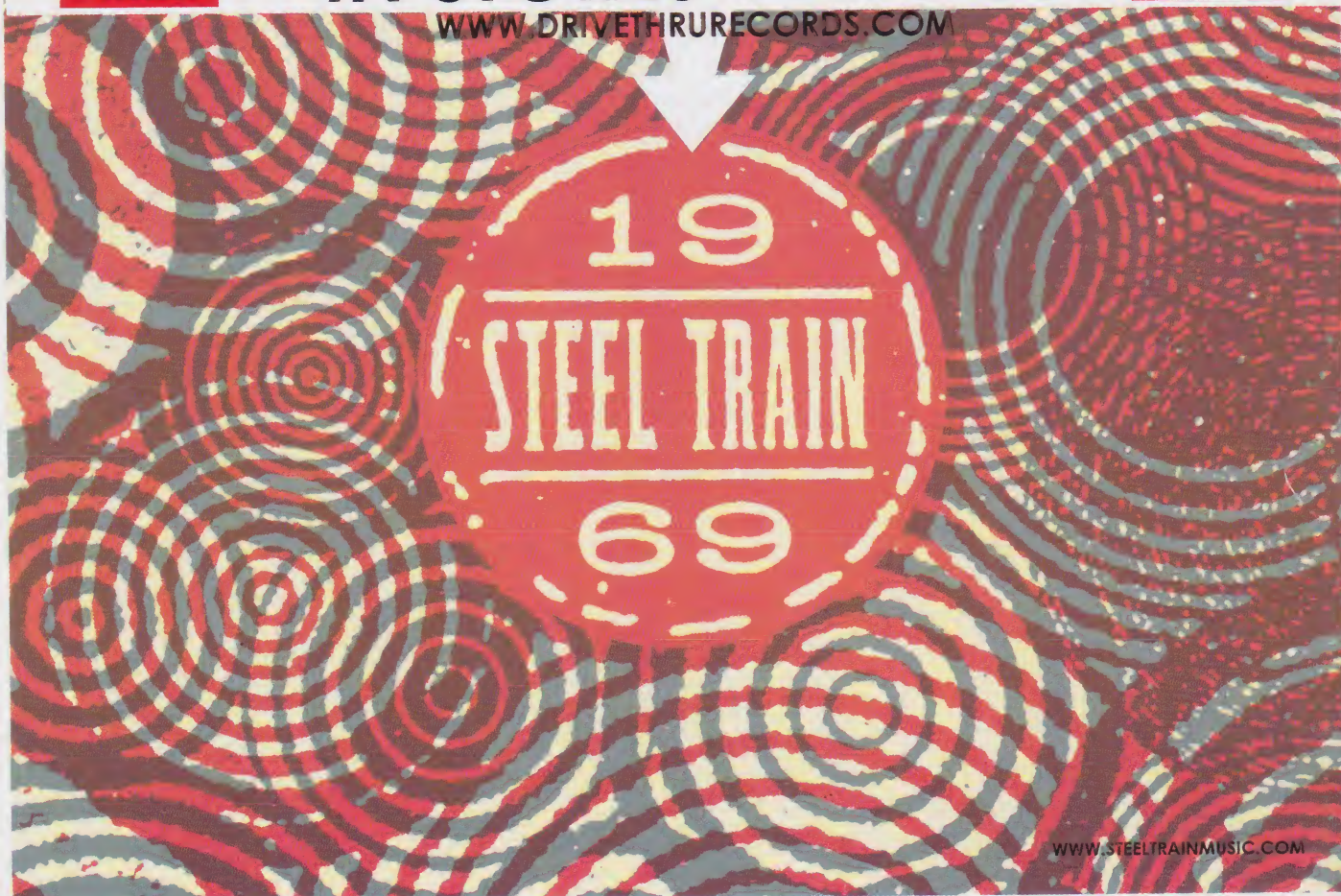
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